THE LEVEL OF MORAL COMPETENCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VARIABLES OF, GENDER, SPECIALIZATION AND ACADEMIC YEAR AMONG AL FALAH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DUBAI

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify the level of Moral Competence among a (245) female and male students at Al Falah University in Dubai from management, law and mass communication disciplines. The researcher used the Arabian version of moral competence scale developed by Mahasneh (2014) after modifying some items to fit the Emirati environment, validity and reliability were constructed. The scale consists of (38) items distributed on three domains: (Integrity/honesty, impression management and Responsibility). To detect the level of moral competence; the arithmetic means, and standard deviations were calculated from the student's performance on the three scale domains and the scale as a whole. The results showed a moderate level of moral competence among the students at Al Falah University. The study also found no statistically significant differences at the level (α=0.05) or less between students due to the variables of gender (male/female), specialization. The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the level (α=0.05) or less between students in the domains of the scale due to the academic year variable with the exception of the impression management domain; students from the second, third and fourth years showed higher level in impression management compared to students of the first year. The researcher recommended the importance of students awareness of moral competence and moral intelligence and to carry out more studies on moral competence in the light of other variables such as self-awareness, self-efficacy, emotional and social competence**.**

Keywords: Moral Competence; Moral Intelligence; Morals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adaptation is considered from the internal and external changes in the environment, and strive to achieve success in life and work and social relations is of the demands that the individual seeks to achieve, and the individual need to choose actions bring him this adaptation, taking into account that his choice of doing humanitarian acts means opting for an alternative from a group alternatives and choices, and morals affect the individual's awareness of alternatives. Based on "Kohlberg" theory of moral development, the individual aqcuires morals from upbringing, education, culture and customs, and is defined as acceptable public standards of conduct, as judged by the person or group in society. In other words, morality is the appropriateness and validity of what the person thinks or does (Nor Hamid, Idrus & Mat Saat, 2012); Morality from "Kohlberg" perspective is the competence to make judgments and decisions, and work in line with the global value principles, "Kohlberg" claimed that the relationship between the individual and others is formed according to the level of moral judgment of the individual (Aridag & Yuksel, 2010). Morals are of important social competencies, and have a

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role in social development and growth of the human being. The evolution of efficiency in moral judgment in the individual is important to the development of societies; many philosophers and sociologists believe that the nucleus of human societies is in a moral order.

Morals are defined on the basis of compliance with behavioral or corresponding base entrance; as a list of things to do and other things best avoided; therefore morals are measured by the number of cases in which the individual follow the behavior which is accepted morally, and avoid the wrong behavior, and if the corresponding exceeds the offense or violation. The entrance to the goodwill considers the compliance or conformance a weak Indicator of ethics, which takes into account the fact that the ethical intention of the individual is the best indicator of morality. Thus, based on this definition, the behavior is considered good morally if it was based on good moral faith, values and motives and ethical principles. The behavioral compliance or conformance theory has an echo in the psychology of moral behavior and the entrances of reward and punishment in the moral education, the theory of good faith was echoed also in moral attitudes and motivations and values, and in many types of breeding values and moral development (Lind, 2008).

There was a widespread belief that morality is completely separated from the individual cognitive abilities and competencies. At the beginning of the twentieth century, some psychologists began to see that there is an urgent need to exceed the separation between knowledge and passion; that need has led to the formation of the theory of two-dimensional (double) in ethics and moral growth, which defines moral behavior that it consists of non separated dimensions; namely: individual passion about moral principles or ideas, and his ability to know the reasons, and act in proportion to those ideas and principles.

Kohlberg has tried to integrate attempts to measure the adequacy of moral judgment; he introduced a clear example of the relationship between morality and moral behavior through his definition of adequacy of moral judgment as: the ability to make decisions and make moral judgments based on internal principles (self-restraint) and do a harmonious act with those provisions. The definition of Kohlberg indicates a qualitative development in addressing the subject of morality; it was for the first time that morals were defined using competence terms (the ability and capacity and energy), rather than just a trend or value, in addition to the lack of separation between knowledge, emotion and behavior, and therefore moral behavior has been defined based on the inner side and accepted moral principles, rather than the external social norms, as well as finding a definition includes three dimensions: (passion, knowledge and behavior) (Lind, 2008).

There are a number of explanations for moral choices that can be generated; some people depend on the logic of justice or moral reasoning, while others depend on the concepts of care and attention, or social norms and conventions, or religion (Duriez & Soenens, 2006).

1.1.   *Moral Competence*

The term competence is defined in general; that includes at least two levels: first, the individual possesses a certain knowledge such as (the ability to identify the causes of a problem), and the second, the individual possesses experience in a particular area, and the ability to act in an appropriate manner (Mahasneh, 2014).

Park & Peterson (2006) see that competence is the humanitarian function that is effective in achieving the valuable objectives that the individual wants to achieve; it is the human performance effective in

achieving the valuable desired goals. The construction and development of competence can lead to significant outcomes show positive growth and prosperity away from the negative output. Most theories agree that moral competence not only how people think about moral dilemmas and solutions, but also thinking about moral behavior and socially acceptable behavior. Psychologists pointed out the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that raise rate of the moral reasoning and moral behavior and emotional assimilation and empathy, taking into account the point of view of the other party (Park & Peterson, 2006).

Ma (2012) defines moral competence as emotional inclination to do altruism behaviors toward others, and the ability to judge the issues and moral dimensions in a logical and consistent way, and in advanced level of growth and development. Kohlberg (1984) indicates that the moral competence is the ability to make decisions and moral provisions based on internal principles, and acting in line with those provisions, and that the most prominent elements of the moral competence are the goals of the subject, and the hierarchy of values and standards that the individual considers it understandable in a specific community. Moral competence based on the standards and values and goals and objectives and interests and motives and feelings and moral situations. Brytting (2002) sees that the moral competence is the ability to integrate cognition, actions and ideas into a comprehensive unit, in addition to the ability to understand the choices and actions, and self-understanding as an independent entity. Jormsri, Kunaviktikul, Ketefian & Chaowalit (2005) add that the moral competence require knowledge and familiarity and commitment to values, and it indicates the individual's ability to recognize and realize that feelings affect what is good or not good in situations, then those feelings appear in making decisions and doing deeds.

The present study provides envision about some of the moral competence dimensions, namely: (responsibility and honesty and integrity). Here are some of the ideas contained in the educational and psychological literature on these dimensions:

1.1.1. Responsibility

The fact that the individual does intended behaviors which make him responsible for these behaviors and their consequences, compared with unintended behaviors, because of beliefs and desires in intended behaviors. The term responsibility is used in many forms; it is usually used as a synonym for the words of blame and error, and sometimes the term is used to find the relationship between the event and its source, as the term is used to describe personal; as if to say: so and so person is responsible if he usually has a commitment to fulfill his duties, and we call the person that he is also responsible if he has mental and developmental competence.

The term "responsibility" is used mainly when talking about morality and the law, in order to determine whether there is appropriate behavior morally and doesn't violate the law.

1.1.2. Truthfulness & Honesty

Honesty is based on a sense of justice, and the belief that others need the right information to achieve their plans in line with their interests. Honesty has mutual utility; for the other and the person himself, and the honest community benefit from all its members. The honesty is a deliberate commitment to the laws, a strong ally with Justice. Honesty is telling the other party with what the person believed to be true in the context of direct query (when they are asked directly).

1.1.3. Integrity

Integrity requires three steps; namely:

i.   The distinction between right and wrong: a distinction of right and wrong and the organized overall sense of right and wrong as an immoral law. Reference is made to the difference between adopting a preset code of moral law and the involvement in the process of helping to build this moral law and adopting it.

ii. Act in proportion to what has been indistinguishable even if it affect the person: they build on what turns out that he is properly disposed. And act and behave as an individual believed to be a necessary and essential to the integrity, even if there was a sacrifice from the same person, and therefore the individual's desire to do by doing what he knows to what to do, and this ensures consistency between the individual's thoughts and actions.

iii. Public recognition of the law that appears at the disposal of the individual: that the individual says what he does based on his understanding and distinguishing between right and wrong. The individual who owns integrity is someone who expresses the moral law openly without shame or disgrace; public recognition of obvious law indicates that the person does not feel ashamed or shame to follow this law and it is worth believing it or its advocacy by others (Liszka, 2002).

In light of the review of educational research on moral competence it shows that there are a small number of research conducted on the subject, and thus the previous literature was not rich in the field of moral competence, specially Arab studies, the researcher didn't find only a small number of studies that will be mentioned according to its year of publication; Yang & Wu (2008) examined the level of adequacy of moral judgment in a sample of adolescent students in China. To achieve the objectives of the study the researchers apply the adequacy of moral judgment scale which was developed by German psychologist George Lind. The study sample consisted of (724) volunteers from students of schools and colleges where the study takes two years, and colleges where the study takes four years. The study results indicated that the relationship between the variables: gender, specialization and the level of schools (normal schools and basic schools), and years of study at the college (two years or four years) and the adequacy of moral judgment is not statistically significant at the level of (0.05) or less, and in general students in advanced stages of study showed a higher level of moral judgment than novices students.

In a study carried out by Buell (2009) about the relationship between moral education and moral reasoning; the researcher tried to measure the moral reasoning using Rests' scale DIT-2, and examine the moral education through the completion of courses in morals, where the study sample consisted of students of specialization in accounting undergraduate and graduate studies from (6) Colleges and universities in the upper Midwest and the southern region of the United States, the results of the study showed a statistically significant relationship between moral education and moral reasoning among the students, but the results were not in the expected direction; the completion of courses in morals had less significance than students who have not yet finished the courses in morals. The results also showed that students who ranged in age from 22 years old or less have a higher level of moral reasoning than students who are over the age of 22 years. It also appeared that the interaction between gender and year of study and moral maturity was not statistically significant.

Aridag & Yuksel (2010) conducted a study in which they investigate the relationship between moral judgment and emotional assimilation skills. Two studies were conducted on different samples; the first study sample consisted of (68) females and (61) males who were studying in different sections

of the Faculty of Education at Uludag University. The second study sample consisted of the (294) females and (141) males, ranging in age from 20 to 29 years old, studying different disciplines at the university colleges. Dokmen Empathic Skill Scale (ESS) scale and Lind's Moral Judgment Test (MJT) scale were distributed. In both separate studies, the results indicated that the relationship between the students' moral choice and emotional assimilation is not statistically significant at the level of (0.05) or less.

Nor, Zaihairul & Ayu (2012) conducted a study aimed to identify the level of morality among a group of young Malaysians. The updated Moral Competence Index (MCI) was used. The assumptions of the study are:

(1) There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the moral competence level among a sample of young Malaysian attributable to gender variable.
(2) There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the moral competence level among a sample of young Malaysian attributed to religious affiliation.

The study sample consisted of 75 young men and women; including (19) males and (56) females. The results of the study showed the existence of significant differences between males and females in the scale domain: (admit mistakes and failures). And a statistically significant differences in some domains of the scale: (admit mistakes and failures, and concern for others and the ability to overcome the mistakes of others) and this is attributed to religious affiliation variable.

A study for Mahasneh (2014) aimed to identify the level of moral competence among a sample of students of the Hashemite University in Jordan. Where the sample consisted of (909) students from the Hashemite University in different year levels and different specializations, they were aged between (18) and (22) years old. Arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated for the performance of students on the moral competence scale. The results of the study showed that college students have a medium level of moral competence, and that there are statistically significant differences among the participants in the level of moral competence due to gender in favor of females, and the differences are statistically significant due to the school year, academic performance in favor of the higher levels of performance and the most superior.

A study by Jeter (2014) revealed a lack of statistically significant relationship between age and moral competence, gender and job position (primary or secondary or a simple position), geographic location (rural or suburban or urban), and the presence of a weak significant correlation between the size of the enterprise (from 1 to more than 100 employees) and moral competence. A questionnaire of demographic information and moral judgment scale was distributed via the website on a sample of 100 people aged between (23 and 73) years, and by applying one-way analysis of variance (One-Way Anova), and Person Correlations, and T. test for the independent samples age or career position or gender did not predict the moral competence.

Samanci (2015) conducted a study aimed at finding the relationship between the competencies of moral judgment and critical thinking skills in a sample of the last academic year students majoring in biology and elementary education candidates to work in the teaching profession. The study also focused on examining the impact of specialization, gender and degree of academic performance (GPA) in the competencies of moral judgment and critical thinking skills. Moral Judgment Test was distributed to determine the level of competencies of moral judgment, and Cornell Critical Thinking Tests (Level Z) to determine the level of critical thinking abilities among respondents, where the

study sample consisted of 76 male and female students in the final year majoring in biology and primary education. The study results indicated statistically significant positive relationship between the competencies of moral judgment and critical thinking skills, with no relationship between the degrees of sample members on moral judgment testing and their academic grades (GPA). The results also showed a statistically moderate correlation between the academic performance grades (GPA) and test scores of critical thinking.

After viewing the previous studies it is noted that there are a small number of studies that aimed to examine the level of moral competence, and some of them considered that the respondents enjoy a high level of moral judgment is a sign of moral competence. It is also noted that previous studies have used a variety of moral competence scales, and the samples were from different age groups and multiple cultures. In the limits of the researcher knowledge, there are no Arabic studies on the subject of moral competence, except the study of Mahasneh (2014) which is published in English. And the current study was significant in that it tried to detect the level of moral competence among a sample of university students in the United Arab Emirates. This is a justification for the current study and distinguishes it from other previous studies examining the subject of moral competence in the UAE's environment.

1.2.   *The Study Problem and its Questions*

This study attempts to answer some questions: What is the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students? Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students? Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students due to gender, specialization and the academic year?

1.2.1. *Objectives of the study*

The present study aims to identify the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students. It also aims to detect differences between Al Falah University students in moral competence due to gender, specialization and the academic year.

1.2.2. *The importance of studying*

The importance of the study appears when it aimed to show the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students based on self-appreciation, and benefit from the results of the current study to highlight the moral competence, and its role in building effective social relations. Such study will help decision-makers to recognize the importance of moral competence among the students in the universities, to be put into account when the subject of moral competence when designing curricula and training programs to develop the moral behavior of students in order to achieve the objectives of the educational process. The present study addressed the issue of moral competence, and with reference to the dimensions of that competence, which cast a great interest in the present in the field of education, recently the votes have increased about the need for attention to the moral behavior of students, rather than the traditional view focusing only on academic achievement. Moral competence contributes to the development of behavior, and facilitates learning, and achieves best social cohesive, and a development of mental health. This study also highlighted through the theoretical framework the importance of students owning a high level of honesty and

integrity and responsibility, thus contributing to the academic climate, which is characterized by the provision of positive relations.

1.3. *Limitations of the Study*

The results of this study are determined by sample characteristics which are Students at Al Falah University, and the psychometric properties of the tool which was prepared for the purposes of current research, which is a scale of moral competence (The Moral Competency Inventory).

1.4. *Terminology of study*

Moral Competence is a term used in the current study to indicate the student who has a master and internalize the laws and mastery in the use of language, skill, and knowledge, showing the integration of a number of important capabilities; such as: a sense of moral and desire to do what is right, and serious will to do the right thing, and the trend and the ability to continue to do what is right, and wisdom, caution and prudence, and possess knowledge about how to do what is right (Liszka, 2002). And the moral competence is defined procedurally in this study as: total score obtained by the student on the ethical sufficiently scale used in this study, as scale items measure the student's level in the integrity and honesty and impression management and responsibility.

2. STUDY APPROACH

The researcher adopted descriptive approach in this study; because it suits the purposes of the present study, since the study aimed to identify the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students, and the extent of the difference in moral competence due to gender, specialization and academic year.

2.1. *Population of the Study and its Sample*

The study population consisted of all Al Falah University students who form (562) students from the disciplines of business administration, mass communication and law, according to the statistics of Admission and Registration in Al Falah University in the first semester of the academic year (2016/2017). The study sample consisted of 245 male and female students, and the scale was distributed among the faculty members at the university to be delivered by hand to the students during lectures, table (1) shows the distribution of the study sample on male and female by gender, specialization and the academic year.

Table 1: The research sample distribution according to personal variables

Specialization	First year		Second year		Third year		Fourth year		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Business administration	16	23	8	8	4	7	1	7	74
Mass communication	22	59	6	18	0	4	0	0	109
Law	11	32	3	12	2	1	0	1	62
Total	49	114	17	38	6	13	1	8	245

2.2.   The study tool

The researcher used the Arabized version of the moral competence (The Moral Competency Inventory) (Martin, 2010) developed by "Mahasneh" (Mahasneh, 2014) after the amendment of some paragraphs to suit the UAE's environment, and after verifying its validity and reliability, the scale consists of (38) items represent a description of the moral cpmpetence, paragraphs are distributed on three areas; namely:

i.   ***Integrity/Honesty*:** And this is by Adhering to the truth and avoids deception, with a sense of justice and a belief that others need to correct information and compliance with laws. It includes paragraphs: (2, 4, 5.12, 13, 18, 20, 25.31)

ii. ***Impression Management*:** It includes paragraphs: (1, 6, 7.8, 17 and 21, 23, 27.28, 9, 15.22, 24.33, 34, 35.36, 16, 37.38)

iii. ***Responsibility*:** Take responsibility of the personal choices and admit mistakes and failures, as well as take responsibility for helping others. It includes paragraphs: (3, 29, 30, 11, 32.10, 14 and 19.26)

2.3.   Validity

2.3.1. Arbitrators' validity

After modifying some paragraphs; the tool was subjected to (3) arbitrators from specialists in the field of counseling, mental health and educational psychology at Abu Dhabi University and Al Falah University. Each arbitrator was asked to express an opinion on the clarity of the paragraphs and its measurement of the concept, which it has been prepared for it and its relation to the sub-scale, and the wording of some paragraphs was amended to suit the referees' notes.

2.3.2. Factorial validity

The ability of each paragraph of the scale to discrimination by calculating the correlation of the paragraph and the total score was verified, (calculation of difficulty and discrimination coefficients for the paragraphs: The difficulty factor for each paragraph was calculated by finding the percentage of students who responded to the paragraph correctly, and the ability of each paragraph was calculated to discriminate through the corrected transaction calculation of the paragraph's relation to the sub-scale to which it belongs (CORRECTED ITEM TOTAL CORRELATION)) table no. (2) Shows the correlation coefficients of the paragraph with total degree for each domain of the scale.

It is from table 2 that the correlation coefficients between the paragraphs and the total score ranged from (0.12- 0.60). Most paragraphs' correlation coefficients with the total score of the domain is higher than (0.25) transactions; this indicates that the scale has appropriate validity connotations, and fulfills the purposes of the present study. It is clear from the table also paragraphs: (2, 4.13, 6.17, 23.27, 19.32) its correlation coeffceints with the total score of the domain (0.07, 0.10, 0.08, 0.16, 0.04, 0.13, 0.21, 0.068, 0.16) ; so the correlation coefficient is less than (0.25); however, it may be appropriate by virtue of its proximity to the standard.

2.4.   Reliability

To check the reliability of the scale; the reliability of the internal consistency of the sub-areas of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients using equation (Cronbach-Alpha). Table (3) shows the number the reliability of the internal consistency of the sub-domains of the scale.

Table 2: Correlation coefficients of the paragraph with Overall degree for each domain of the scale

Integrity and honesty			Impression management			Responsibility		
Paragraph No.	Correlation with the domain	Correlation with the total score	Paragraph No.	Correlation with the domain	Correlation with the total score	Paragraph No.	Correlation with the domain	Correlation with the total score
2	007	0.18	I	0.26	0.286	3	.257	0.28
4	0.10	0.20	6	0.16	0.20	10	.612	0.45
5	0.40	0.56	7	0.41	0.40	11	.305	0.21
12	0.36	0.37	8	0.31	0.33	14	.327	0.30
13	0.08	0.08	9	0.16	0.12	19	.068	0.023
18	0.39	0.456	15	0.43	0.35	26	.406	0.335
20	0.34	0.359	16	0.57	0.60	29	.295	0.238
25	0.42	0.487	17	0.04	0.034	30	.469	0.384
31	0.26	0.355	21	0.37	0.495	32	.166	0.175
			23	0.13	0.453			
			27	0.21	0.243			
			28	0.42	0.349			
			22	0.39	0.246			
			24	0.35	0.426			
			33	0.32	0.334			
			34	0.56	0.520			
			35	0.57	0.562			
			36	0.48	0.514			
			37	0.32	0.313			
			38	0.37	0.219			

Table 3: The reliability of the internal consistency using Cronbach-Alpha coefficients equation

Domain	The reliabilty of the internal consistency
Responsibility	0.58
Integrity and honesty	0.76
Impression management	0.62
Overall degree	0.83

Results shown in table (3) indicate that the reliability coefficients of the domains: (integrity and honesty, impression management and responsibility) amounted respectively (0.58, 0.76, 0.62), and the reliability of the total score was (0.83). This indicates that the scale has appropriate reliability meet the objectives of the current study. Despite the relatively low of integrity and honesty domain according to other domain, but the presence of a representative sample of the final application it is possible to raise the reliability of this domain.

3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.1. Results relating the first question

To answer the first question: "What is the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students?", means and standard deviations for the performance of students on the domains of the scale were calculated, namely: integrity and honesty and impression management, responsibility and the scale as a whole. The following calculation base was built on to determin the moral adequacy levels: the upper limit of the used gradation- minimum limit of the used gradation / number of commonality levels, and thus it become (5-1) / 3 = 1.33, which represents the length of

each category, and then it is added to minimum limit of the gradation, so the degree of prevalence of ethical sufficiency among university students based on the arithmetic mean is:

- ➢ Less than 2.33 low
- ➢ 2.34-3.66 average.
- ➢ 3.67 or more, high.

And table 4 shows the level of moral competence among university students.

Table 4: Averages, standard deviations, rank and degree of the performance of students on the domains of the scale, and the scale as a whole

Domain	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
Responsibility	2.96	0.41	1	Moderate
Integrity and honesty	2.70	0.39	2	Moderate
Impression management	2.26	0.40	3	Moderate
Overall degree	2.53	0.35		Moderate

Shown in table (4) that the arithmetic means of the domains of moral competence of the students ranged between (2.26-2.96), and the arithmetic mean of the tool as a whole reached (2.53), it is shown in the table also that all the means are within the mid-level, and this suggests that students at Al Falah University have an average level of moral competence, and that responsibility is the higher competence among the sample members, which its mean reached (2.96) with a standard deviation (0.41). The integrity and honesty competence came in the second arrangement; the arithmetic mean reached (2.70) and standard deviation (0.39). The impression management competence was ranked third, its mean reached (2.26) and standard deviation (0.40).

3.2. Results relating the second question

To answer the second question: "Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the level of moral competence among a sample of Al Falah University students?" analysis of variance of the repeated measurements of the level of moral competence among university students, and to judge the statistically significant differences. Table (5) shows the results of the application:

Table 5: The results of analysis of variance for repeated measurements of the level of moral competence among university students

Test	Value	F	Virtual degrees of freedom	Degrees of error freedom	Sig
Billy tris	0.78	416.637	2	240	0.00
Wilks Lambda	0.22	416.637	2	240	0.00
Hutlnj Tris	3.47	416.637	2	240	0.00
Roy's Largest Root	3.47	416.637	2	240	0.00

It is clear in table (5) that the value of Wilks Lambda reached (416.637), which is a significant value at a level of (0.05) or less, and this indicates that there is a difference in the level of moral competence, and in order to check the domain where the significant differences appear; (LSD) test for bilateral comparisons was conducted. Table (6) shows the results of this analysis.

Table 6: Results of (LSD) test for bilateral comparisons

Competence	Responsibility	Integrity and honesty	Impression management
Responsibility		.436*	-.265*
Integrity and honesty			-.701*
Impression management			

It is noted from table (6) that the domain of responsibility is highest than integrity and honesty, and it is less than impression management, it is evident from the table that is also the domain of integrity and honesty is less than impression management.

3.3. *Results relating the third question*

To answer the third question: "Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less in the level of moral competence among a sample of university students due to the variables: gender, specialization and academic year" means and standard deviations were calculated to measure the level of moral competence among the students at Al Falah University depending on the variables (gender, specialization and academic year). It was the application of Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) for the domains, and Three-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) of the instrument as a whole to detect the differences in the level of moral competence among students depending on the variables. Tables (7), (8), (9) show the results of arithmetic means and standard deviations.

Table 7: Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the domains of the scale depending on the gender variable

Domain	Gender	No.	Mean	Standard deviation
Responsibility	Male	172	2.71	0.43
	Female	73	2.68	0.30
Integrity and honesty	Male	169	2.29	0.44
	Female	73	2.21	0.29
Impression management	Male	172	2.98	0.44
	Female	73	2.92	0.33
Overall degree	Male	172	2.55	0.39
	Female	73	2.49	0.22

Table 8: Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the domains of the scale depending on the Specialization variable

Domain	Specialization	No.	Mean	Standard deviation
Responsibility	Business Management	74	2.67	0.49
	Mass Communication	109	2.71	0.35
	Law	62	2.70	0.34
Integrity and honesty	Business Management	74	2.28	0.46
	Mass Communication	106	2.25	0.35
	Law	62	2.28	0.42
Impression management	Business Management	74	2.98	0.50
	Mass Communication	109	2.99	0.34
	Law	62	2.89	0.39
Overall degree	Business Management	74	2.54	0.44
	Mass Communication	109	2.53	0.28
	Law	62	2.52	0.33

Table 9: Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the domains of the scale depending on the academic year variable

Domain	Academic year	No.	Mean	Standard deviation
Responsibility	First year	163	2.70	0.42
	Second year	55	2.71	0.39
	Third year	18	2.65	0.17
	Fourth year	9	2.63	0.08
Integrity and honesty	First year	160	2.24	0.42
	Second year	55	2.29	0.41
	Third year	18	2.31	0.28
	Fourth year	9	2.32	0.35
Impression management	First year	163	2.90	0.45
	Second year	55	3.05	0.32
	Third year	18	3.11	0.22
	Fourth year	9	3.21	0.04
Overall degree	First year	163	2.51	0.37
	Second year	55	2.57	0.32
	Third year	18	2.58	0.18
	Fourth year	9	2.61	0.21

It is noted from tables No. (7), (8), (9) that there are apparent differences between the averages in sub-domains (responsibility, integrity, honesty and management of the impression and the scale as a whole), depending on the variables of gender, specialization and academic year. In order to verify the significance of these differences multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied, and table (10) shows the results of this analysis.

Table 10: The results of multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) to all domains of the scale depending on the variables (gender, specialization and academic year)

Variables		Sum of squares	Df	Mean of squares	F	Sig
Responsibility	Gender	0.03	1	0.03	0.22	0.64
	Specialization	0.05	2	0.02	0.15	0.86
	Academic year	0.05	3	0.02	0.11	0.96
	Error	36.51	235	0.16		
	Total	36.69	241			
Integrity and honesty	Gender	0.32	1	0.32	1.93	0.17
	Specialization	0.04	2	0.02	0.12	0.89
	Academic year	0.14	3	0.05	0.28	0.84
	Error	38.82	235	0.17		
	Total	39.35	241			
Impression management	Gender	0.16	1	0.16	1.01	0.32
	Specialization	0.60	2	0.30	1.88	0.16
	Academic year	1.89	3	0.63	3.91	0.01
	Error	37.78	235	0.16		
	Total	40.46	241			
Overall	Gender	0.19	1	0.19	1.60	0.21
	Specialization	0.01	2	0.01	0.06	0.95
	Academic year	0.24	3	0.08	0.67	0.57
	Error	27.99	235	0.12		
	Total	28.46	241			

It is clear from table (10) that the statistical values of "F" was (0.22, 1.93, 1.01, 1.60) for the domains of responsibility, integrity and honesty and impression management and the scale as a whole in order. All of these values are not significant at the level of (0.05) or less depending on the gender variable. As shown from the table the absence of significant differences between students depending on the specialization variable in the domains of responsibility, integrity and honesty and impression management and the scale as a whole, where the values of "F" reached (0.15, 0.012, 1.88, 0.06) respectively, and all of these values are not significant at the level of (0.05) or less. The results also indicated that the statistical values of "F" was (0.11, 0.28, 3.81, 0.67) for the domains of responsibility, integrity and honesty and impression management and the scale as a whole in order. All of these values are not significant at the level of (0.05) and less depending on the academic year variable with the exception of the area of impression management. In order to verify the academic year in which the significant differences appear; Scheffe post-hoc comparisons was conducted. Table (11) shows the results of this analysis.

Table 11: Results of Scheffe test for the post comparisons of the differences in ethical sufficiently according to academic year variable

Academic year	First year	Second year	Third year	Fourth year
First year		-.14460*	-.20723*	-.30599*
Second year			-.06263	-.16139
Third year				-.09877
Fourth year				

It is shown in table (11) a presence of significant differences between students of the first academic year on the one hand, students of the second, third and fourth university years on the other hand, in favor of students of the upper academic years, consecutively compared with the students from the first year.

4.   DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1.   *Discussion of the results relating to the first question*

The results relating the level of moral competence among Al Falah University students showed that the students have an average level of moral competence, and that the responsibility is the highest competence they have with a mean of (2.96). The competence of integrity and honesty ranked second with an average (2.70). The competence of impression management was ranked third with a mean of (2.26). The result of this study agreed with the findings of the study of (Mahasneh, 2014); as the results of the study indicated that the Hashemite University students in Jordan have an average level of moral competence. Perhaps the reason for this result is due to that moral competence begins with the process of assimilation of norms and moral values, models, laws and examples; the assimilation of those standards and principles mean that we are ready to modify our behavior without the need for external tuning in most cases (Liszka, 2002), and "Piaget" claimed that the individual does not show high moral behavior because of assimilation of standards, values and laws only, he suggested that he must build his own moral world by trying to solve the ethical problems that require fair solutions, and on the basis of Piaget's theory, individuals are making progress in the moral side from age group to another, moving from egocentrism to the ability to balance between their views and the views of others in order to achieve a balanced moral reasoning (Fedeles, 1993). And Arab societies in general focus on the external adjustment with a lack of training opportunities on internal control and

assimilate the values and standards, and moral competence heavily influenced by socialization and social environment; In the early years that affect the life of the individual the social environment is the family and parents, and when the child becomes socially enters school and his moral characteristics are affected by peers and the community. The absence of education and moral education in our communities may make young people more affected by models they see in the media and in their peers. The teaching and education affect the personal and moral development , and what is happening in the classroom in our communities may not encourage the development of high levels of moral competence, and thus a medium level of ability to take appropriate moral decisions is formed in the students, and a weakness in the opportunities to develop the correct values, self-awareness, sensitivity to other people's feelings, emotional assimilation, empathy and self-control and deal with the temptations and respect for the rights of others, even with those whose beliefs and behaviors contrary to our beliefs and our behavior, and respect for diversity, justice, fairness and stand up against injustice and inequity (Clarken, 2010).

4.2.   Discussion of the results relating to the second and third questions:

The results of the study relating the second and the third questions revealed a lack of statistically significant differences between students in moral competence due to gender and specialization. In addition to the lack of statistically significant differences depending on the academic year variable with the exception of the impression management domain; the students of the second and the third and fourth school years showed highest level of impression management compared to the students of the first year. The results of this study didn't consist with the findings of each of (Aredag & Yuksel, 2010; Nor Hamid, Idrus & Mat Saat, 2012; Mahasneh, 2014). As the results of the studies indicated statistically significant differences in moral competence due to gender and academic year differences, and this result agreed with the findings of each of (Shaogang & Huihong, 2008; Buell, 2009; Jeter, 2014); The results of studies indicated a lack of the presence of statistically significant differences in moral competence between males and females, and between students from different academic years and different specializations. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that most of Al Falah University students are citizens, and graduates of public schools in the UAE, so the respondents belonging to the same community and exposed to similar experiences about moral education with the similarity of the circumstances and the surrounding environment, and what is imposed by the environment and the prevailing culture of behaviors and habits on the individuals. The education system determines the acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for all male and female students, and in the different educational levels, and therefore the culture and socialization and educational system have a role in the convergence of respondents in the level of moral competence from different specialties and gender and it offer similar opportunities for moral competence. In addition to that religion is another source to learn moral values; it guides people to make decisions related to appropriate or inappropriate means in life and social environment, and members of the sample derive their values and attitudes from the instructions of the Islamic religion. With regard to the result of the study related to the existence of a relationship between moral competence, and the academic year, the results of the study indicated the presence of differences between the first, second and third year students in the competence of impression management. This result can be explained based on the moral development and moral behavior theories; such as: the theory of "Piaget", and the theory of "Kohlberg"; as those theories assume the growth cognitive processes of the individual, and ways of expressing inner feelings with the progress in age and the increase of expertise, knowledge and interaction with the environment, thus, the development of the individual's moral competence because of cognitive growth and interaction with the environment, including its ability to manage the impression (Fedeles, 1993).

4.3.   Recommendations of the Study

Through the previous presentation and analysis of the results of the study, some recommendations can be drawn such as educating students of the importance of ethical and moral competence and moral intelligence and the consequences of the commitment to ethical behavior in order to achieve success in the social and academic field, and also conducting educational and psychological studies to examine the relationship between moral competence and other various variables; such as: self-awareness, self-efficacy, social and emotional competence, then make a revision of the structure of curricula and textbooks and educational programs, particularly in relation to the development of moral competence, through designing curricula and courses specializing in the development of moral behavior.

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