

Effectiveness of a Values Clarification Program on Ethical Reasoning and Identity Stability

Angel. Lee¹, Emre. Yildiz^{2*}, Aman Ullah Chaudhary³

¹ Faculty of Social Sciences & Liberal Arts, Department of Psychology, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

² Department of General Psychology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkiye

³ Department of Psychology, Haripur University, Islamabad, Pakistan

* Corresponding author email address: emre.yildiz@metu.edu.tr

E d i t o r

R e v i e w e r s

Stefano Vinaccia

Profesor de psicología Universidad del SINU, Montería, Colombia
Vinalpi47@hotmail.com

Reviewer 1: Karim Afshariniya 

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kermanshah Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran Email: k.afsharineya@iauksh.ac.ir

Reviewer 2: Hooman Namvar

Assisstant Professor, Department of Psychology, Saveh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Saveh, Iran. Email: hnamvar@iau-saveh.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The description of international applications (Indonesia, etc.) is useful but lacks a transition to justify the study's focus on Turkish young adults. A clearer rationale for selecting Turkey as a cultural and educational context would strengthen the argument.

Introduction, Paragraph 5: The sentence "These findings highlight the broader psychological implications..." introduces too many constructs (coping, emotion regulation, decision-making) without unpacking how they relate to ethical reasoning and identity stability. Consider limiting to two central psychological constructs and explaining mechanisms more clearly.

Methods, "Measures – Ethical Reasoning": The sentence "The DIT-2 is a widely recognized standard instrument..." needs clarification regarding which index (e.g., N2, P-score) was used in analysis. The current phrasing may confuse readers about the variable measured.

Findings, Paragraph 1: A critical inconsistency exists in this paragraph: the study earlier reports participants are from Turkey, but this paragraph mentions "30 undergraduate students from various universities in Greece." This discrepancy needs immediate correction for internal consistency.

Findings, Table 3 Narrative: The statistical significance from pretest to posttest and pretest to follow-up is emphasized, but the narrative misses an opportunity to discuss the lack of significant change from posttest to follow-up as an indicator of long-term maintenance.

Discussion, Paragraph 2: The sentence “VCT encourages individuals to engage in introspection...” could be supported by theoretical perspectives such as Rest’s Neo-Kohlbergian approach or Marcia’s identity development theory, to bridge intervention mechanisms with developmental models.

Discussion, Paragraph 4: In stating “values clarification is not a transient cognitive exercise but a developmental catalyst,” it would be stronger to reference any follow-up durations beyond five months in the literature to contextualize this claim.

Discussion, Paragraph 6: The mention of “psychosocial well-being” is speculative as it was not measured. This paragraph should clarify that while relevant literature suggests this outcome, the present study does not provide direct evidence.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

Introduction, Final Paragraph: While the study rationale is stated, the research gap is only implied. Explicitly state that few RCTs have examined VCT’s effects on both ethical reasoning and identity stability in late adolescence to solidify the study’s contribution.

Methods, “Study Design and Participants”: The sentence “Participants were recruited from various educational institutions in Turkey...” lacks detail. Please specify whether recruitment was stratified across academic disciplines or universities and how randomization was operationalized (e.g., computerized list, block randomization).

Methods, “Measures – Identity Stability”: While the EIPQ is described comprehensively, it would enhance transparency to note whether any subscales were excluded or analyzed independently, especially since it encompasses four distinct domains.

Methods, “Value Clarification Intervention”: The intervention description is rich in content but would benefit from including a table summarizing each session’s objectives and techniques. This would aid replication and improve clarity.

Methods, “Data Analysis”: The sentence “In cases where significant interactions were detected...” is accurate but vague. Please specify that interaction effects were probed using pairwise comparisons between time points within each group, if that was the procedure.

Findings, Table 1 Narrative: The phrase “a slight decline at follow-up” referring to ethical reasoning (from 35.63 to 34.51) should be interpreted more carefully. Statistically non-significant declines should not be characterized as “decline” without contextualizing variability.

Findings, Paragraph 3: The Shapiro-Wilk and Levene’s tests are described using variables like “well-being” and “academic achievement,” which were not examined in this study. This appears to be a copy-paste error and should be revised to reflect the actual variables (ethical reasoning and identity stability).

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.