

Original Research Article

NEL NODDING'S VIEW ON THE ETHICS OF CARE AND MORAL EDUCATION

ABSTRACT:

One of the earliest comprehensive theories of care was offered by American philosopher Nel Nodding, who also contended that caring is the basis of morality. According to her, connections are an essential part of being it is to be human, and one's relationships with other people help determine who they are as a person. Modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation are the four main elements of education from the standpoint of care, according to Nel Nodding. The purpose of this research was to find out the nature of the ethics of care proposed by Nel Nodding, analysis of Nodding's Moral Education and find out different components of it, and Compare the perception Nel Nodding and Gilligan with respect to ethics of care and moral education. It is qualitative research. Researchers have collected all the data from various research papers. The care ethics proposed by Nodding can provide a framework for addressing a wide range of ethical issues, from interpersonal interactions to universal problems like poverty and environmental degradation. In addition to her work in care ethics, Nodding has made significant contributions to the field of education.

Key Word: Ethics of Care, Moral Education

INTRODUCTION:

American philosopher, educator, and author Nel Nodding are well-known for her contributions to moral education. She has made significant contributions to the subject that have advanced the idea of care ethics and challenged conventional ideas about morality and education. Nel Nodding was born in Texas in 1929 and graduated from Montclair State College in New Jersey with a bachelor's degree. Later, she earned a Doctorate in Educational Philosophy from Stanford University and a Master's in Mathematics from Rutgers University. Noddings started out as a teacher before becoming an education professor at Stanford, Columbia, and the University of California, Riverside. Nel Nodding was a member of the Stanford faculty in 1977 and was a member of Jack's Professor of Child Education organization from 1992 to 1998. She received the award from Stanford University for teaching excellence three times in 1981, 1982, and 1997. Nodding served four years as associate dean of the school of education. After leaving Stanford University, she worked at Columbia and Colgate University. She also served for some days as president of the Philosophy of Education Society and John Dewey Society. She is also a professor of Education. Nodding describes himself as an 'incurably domestic'. She believes that because of their strong relationship and early educational experiences, she has developed philosophical thinking. "My closest math department colleague advised me to disregard everything and stick to the curriculum to demonstrate to the students that there was a place of continuity, peace, and quiet". We should talk about the issues that were so important and that the students were so concerned about, I felt strongly on the other side, she remarked. "I've

always had a good reputation as a math instructor who succeeds. The youngsters did well. But if I thought the students needed to talk about a social or political issue, I would immediately abandon the quadratic equation (Spector, 2022). Noddings has written more than 20 books and countless articles on a variety of subjects, such as education reform, the ethics of care, and the teaching and learning of mathematics. In her seminal work, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, first published in 1984, she studied what it means to care for and be cared for, making the case that caring is the foundation of moral behavior and ought to be a major focus in education.

OBJECTIVES:

- To find out the nature of ethics of care as proposed by Nel nodding
- To Analysis of Nodding's Moral Education and find out different components of it.
- To Compare the perception of Nel Nodding with Gilligan in ethics of care and moral education.
- To find out the educational perspectives of Nel Nodding's views.

METHODOLOGY:

In this study, the qualitative data analysis method was used. Primary and secondary data were gathered by the researcher from several research papers.

THE NATURE OF ETHICS OF CARE AS PROPOSED BY NEL NODDING:

The ethics of care is a normative ethical theory that maintains that caring for others and being benevolent are morally desirable traits. Since the 1980s, several feminists and environmentalists have created a number of normative ethical theories (Sander et al). Ethics of care emphasize the significance of responding to the person, whereas consequentialist and deontological ethical systems emphasize generalizable principles and impartiality. The person credited with developing the ethics of care, Carol Gilligan, criticized the use of generalized standards as "morally problematic since it breeds moral blindness or indifference." In *A Different Voice* by Gilligan, published in 1982, she made the claim that men and women had the propensity to interpret morality differently. According to her hypothesis, women tended to place a higher value on empathy and compassion than on moral principles. Care-focused feminism, sometimes known as gender feminism, is a school of feminist thought that draws heavily from Carol Gilligan and Nel Nodding's work on the ethics of care (Tong et al. 2009). This theory criticizes the social construction of caring as a feminine trait that is consequently undervalued. "Care-focused feminists regard women's capacity for care as a human strength" (Tong et al. 2009) and believe that both men and women should learn to do it and be expected to do it. Nodding suggests that an ethic of care rather than an ethic of justice could be a more tangible model for evaluating ethical difficulties (Nodding, 1984). Applying relational ethics in a real-world setting is necessary for nodding care-focused feminism, which is founded on an ethic of caring (Nodding, 1989).

The ethics of care approach, which is not intended to be absolute and infallible, contrasts sharply with ethical theories that rely on principles to highlight moral actions, such as Kantian deontology, utilitarianism, and justice theory. Nodding is best known for her theory of care ethics, which is based on the idea that caring relationships are essential to human development and ethical behavior. Her first book was *A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* in 1984. In this book, she explains the feminist approach to

ethics and moral education. The connotations of 'feminine' are off-putting and do not capture what I intended to convey (Nodding, 2013;9). She believed that human interactions were fundamental to mankind and that a person's relationships with other people determine who they are as a person. Nodding stated that a caring connection (a relationship in which people engage in a caring way) is an ethically fundamental aspect of human nature and that caring is a quality shared by all people. Given the fact that the need to care is shared by all people, caring ethics are equally free of the accusation of moral relativism as virtue ethics (Dunn et al (n.d). Experience teaches us to care. learn first what caring is, then care for those with close relationships, and finally try to care for those you cannot directly care for (Noddings, 2002:31). She suggests that traditional approaches to moral education, which emphasize rules and principles, are inadequate because they fail to address the emotional and relational aspects of human experience. Nodding claims that care ethics strongly emphasize the role of relationships, feelings, and empathy in moral judgment. She contends that developing caring relationships is essential for the growth of moral thinking and that people who have empathy for others are inclined to act morally. A perspective on ethics as relational and situational is implied by the idea of ethics of caring. Actions are driven by the needs of and responsibility for others, not by arguments and ideas. The motivations for behavior are not laws or virtues, but rather the relationship with the needs of the other (Noddings, 2012, 2013). Since care plays a large part in the sense of justice on the one hand and advances society on the other, it may be claimed that care is a powerful force in society.

Analysis of Nodding's Moral Education and find out different components of it:

Nel Nodding considers education as the best way to take care of society. A chain of planned and unintentional interactions fosters growth by fostering the development of information, abilities, comprehension, and enjoyment (Nodding, 2002). Nel's nodding gave the home more importance as the proper place to emphasize education. She says that home is the primary teacher. In this context, she prioritized two issues – a) home should be such, where children will get care and love. b) home life should be included in the school curriculum (Nodding, 2002).

Four components of moral education according to the care perspective –

- Modeling
- Dialogue
- Practice
- confirmation

Modeling:

From a caring perspective, teachers are concerned with people's growth as caregivers. Non-cognitive developmentalism is not particularly interested in moral reasoning. According to nodding, the teacher's behavior must convey what it means to care. students must be taught to care as well as have it included in the curriculum. Teachers must demonstrate a caring relationship with students. Since its very authenticity is morally significant, modeling the moral realm may be particularly effective (2002a, p. 287). Noddings cite the following as a bad example: "Education professors and school administrators cannot be sarcastic and dictatorial with teachers in the hope that coercion will make them care for students." The moral ramifications of such insincerity are profound: "The likely outcome is that teachers will

then turn attention protectively to themselves rather than lovingly to their students" (Noddings, 1992, p. 22). Everywhere, ethical standards will deteriorate (Bergman, 2004).

Dialogue:

Careful relationships must be embedded in conversations. Noddings assert that dialogue is such a crucial component of caring that we could not demonstrate care without participating in it. Dialogue helps us gain a thorough understanding of one another and directs our [caring] responses. Dialogue enables us to receive the other in a "common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation (Noddings, 1992; 23). The range of topics that can be discussed in class is enormous. Theorists of care, according to Noddings, "agree with Socrates that an education worthy of the name must help students to examine their own lives and explore the great questions human beings have always asked" (Bergman, 2004). Caregiving relationships can be better understood by talking directly with each other about the caregiver and discussing and critiquing their own relationships with each other. According to nodding, when we care for someone, if we receive feedback from them as well, it will increase the effort of care.

Practice:

Nel Noddings asserts that our experiences tend to create a "mentality." (1998: 191). If we want to develop caring behavior in students then we must make students practice caring. Students need to practice showing care. They can do this by engaging in genuine volunteer work, such as working in hospitals and gardens, caring for the elderly or animals, or volunteering in these settings rather than learning new skills for work-related purposes. This reminds me that doing this kind of volunteer work was expected of me when I was finishing my secondary education in the early 1960s. According to Nodding, these duties, in which students participate in caring apprenticeships, should have the same standing as other educational tasks. We must provide students with the opportunity to care (Jennymackness, 2021). Sometimes the care practice is translated into a particular community service duty. Developing competency in caring can result from such experience, but the growth that is needed is not always ensured by merely meeting the minimum requirements. Children must engage in caring activities alongside adult role models who teach them how to care, converse with them about the challenges and pleasures of doing so, and indicate through their own work why caring is vital. Cooperative learning is highly encouraged in current curricular standards, and it can be used to foster competence in caring. Cooperative learning, however, can be utilized for a wide range of goals and can be defined in a variety of ways. Teachers should make it clear to their pupils that the main goal of cooperative work is to understand, share, and support one another (Nodding, 1998).

Confirmation:

Confirmation distinguishes caring from other methods of moral instruction. Martin Buber defined confirmation as a behavior that supports and affirms the positive traits in others. When we affirm someone, we recognize their better self and promote the growth of that self. We need to be somewhat familiar with one another for this to work. Without this, we are unable to understand the other's true goals or the ideals they may want to realize. In confirmation, formulas, and catchphrases are inappropriate. We don't state that there is one standard for everyone and then say, "High expectations for all." Instead, we see that each

individual we meet is trying to become something admirable, or at least acceptable. The objective of quality must be deemed deserving by both the aspirant and us. We don't validate behavior we believe to be incorrect in people (Nodding, 1998). Confirmation necessitates assigning the best reason conceivable that is consistent with facts. We consider the motives behind an act when someone conducts one that we deem abhorrent. It is frequently easy to pinpoint a variety of potential motivations, ranging from the disgusting and filthy to ones that are acceptable or even admirable. This array wasn't created abstractly. We construct it based on our understanding of this specific other and by paying close attention to what she or he has to say. The motivation we assign must be a plausible, real possibility. We can then begin our conversation by saying something like, "I know you were trying to help your friend," or "I know what you're trying to achieve. Although we will make it known to the other that we disapprove of this specific conduct, we will also make it clear that we believe in a version of ourselves that is superior to this act. The other will frequently respond with great relief. Confirmation motivates us to work towards our idealized selves.

Compare the perception of Nel Nodding and Gilligan with respect to ethics of care and moral education:

American ethicist and psychologist Carol Gilligan are credited with developing the ethics of caring. In contrast to the model developed by Lawrence Kohlberg, Gilligan's mentor and a developmental psychologist, created this one. Gilligan said that when moral growth was assessed using Kohlberg's stages of moral development, boys were found to be more morally mature than girls, and this finding remained true for adults as well (although there are no gender differences when education is considered). Gilligan further stated that Kohlberg's paradigm was not impartial but rather a male view of morality based on abstract duties or obligations and notions of justice.

Gilligan claimed that the "care perspective" was a different but equally valid method of moral thinking that had been suppressed by male liberal justice traditions that placed a premium on independence and autonomy. But rather than being a gender difference, she described it as an issue difference. Later, Gilligan fought back against interpretations of her writing that suggested care ethics had more to do with gender than theme and even established the harmony between care and justice ethics (1986), but she never entirely gave up her claim that women and relational ethics are related. In her book 'Contribution of woman's thinking to Psychological Theory and Education, she explains how gender relates to moral voices and moral mapping. Gilligan and her colleagues argued that the period between the ages of 11 and 16 is crucial for girls' identity formation, being the period when young women learn to stifle their moral intuitions in favor of more obedient moral interpretations.

According to Gilligan, an ethics of care draws our attention to the importance of relationship responsiveness (paying attention, listening, and responding) as well as the consequences associated with cutting ties with oneself or others. Instead of using deductive or mathematical reasoning, it uses inductive, contextual, and psychological reasoning.

Gilligan was largely silent on the moral standing of animals in care ethics, but Noddings made it quite apparent that only nearby, open to receiving care, and capable of reciprocity animals are the subjects of moral obligations on the part of humans.

Educational perspectives of Nel Nodding's views:

Nodding has important accomplishments in the realm of education in addition to her work in care ethics. She is a fervent supporter of holistic education, which places an emphasis on the growth of the full person rather than just academic or intellectual abilities. Nodding has also written extensively about the usefulness of moral and ethical teaching in schools, contending that educational institutions have a duty to support students in the formation of moral beliefs and behaviors. Nodding has criticized conventional educational methods because she believes they excessively emphasize competitiveness and accomplishment. She contends that these methods may harm children's emotional and social growth and result in a limited, instrumental vision of schooling. Nodding proposes that education be based on nurturing connections and should put an emphasis on fostering in pupils a sense of empathy and ethical responsibility. Overall, Nel Nodding's contributions have had a significant influence on how we think about ethics and education, and her theories are still relevant and important today.

DISCUSSION:

Challenges to conventional ideas of morality and education have been influenced by Nel Nodding's work in care ethics and moral education. A more comprehensive and compassionate approach to ethics has resulted from her emphasis on the value of loving relationships and emotional intelligence in moral decision-making. Nodding's care ethics can offer a framework for dealing with a broad range of ethical concerns, from interpersonal interactions to universal challenges like poverty and environmental degradation.

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