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Piaget's theory of moral development pdf

What is piaget's theory of moral development. Educational implications of piaget's theory of moral development pdf. Describe jean piaget's theory of moral development. Jean piaget theory of moral development pdf.

Moral development refers to the process through which children develop the standards of right and wrong within their society, based on social and cultural norms, and laws. Lawrence Kohlberg describes moral development as a process of discovering universal moral principles, and is based on a child's intellectual development. Piaget conceptualizes moral development as a constructivist process, whereby the interplay of action and thought builds moral concepts. Piaget (1932) was principally interested not in what children do (i.e., in whether they break rules or not) but in what they think. In other words he was interested in children's moral reasoning. Jean Piaget was interested in three main aspects of children's understanding of moral issues. Children's understanding of rules. This leads to questions like Where do rules come from? Can rules be changed? Who makes rules? Children's understanding of moral responsibility. This leads to questions like Who is to blame for "bad" things? Is it the outcome of behavior that makes an action "bad"? Is there a difference between accidental and deliberate wrongdoing? Children's understanding of justice. This leads to questions like Should the punishment fit the crime? Are the guilty always punished? Piaget found that children's ideas regarding rules, moral judgments, and punishment tended to change as they got older. In other words just as there were stages to children's cognitive development so there were also universal stages to their moral development. Piaget (1932) suggested two main types of moral thinking: Heteronomous morality (moral realism) Autonomous morality (moral relativism) Heteronomous Morality (5-9 yrs) The stage of heteronomous morality is also known as moral realism – morality imposed from the outside. Children regard morality as obeying other people's rules and laws, which cannot be changed. They accept that all rules are made by some authority figure (e.g. parents, teacher, God), and that breaking the rules will lead to immediate and severe punishment (immanent justice). The function of any punishment is to make the guilty suffer in that the severity of the punishment should be related to severity of wrong-doing (expiatory punishment). During this stage children consider rules as being absolute and unchanging, i.e. "divine like". They think that rules cannot be changed and have always been the same as they are now. Behavior is judged as "bad" in terms of the observable consequences, regardless of the intentions or reasons for that behavior. Therefore, a large amount of accidental damage is viewed as worse than a small amount of deliberate damage. Research Findings Piaget (1932) told the children stories that embodied a moral theme and then asked for their opinion. Here are two examples: There was once a little girl who was called Marie.

Piaget's Theory

Stage	Age Range	Description
Sensorimotor	0-2 years	Coordination of senses with motor response, sensory curiosity about the world. Language used for demands and cataloguing. Object permanence developed
Preoperational	2-7 years	Symbolic thinking, use of proper syntax and grammar to express full concepts. Imagination and intuition are strong, but complex abstract thought still difficult. Conservation developed.
Concrete Operational	7-11 years	Concepts attached to concrete situations. Time, space, and quantity are understood and can be applied, but not as independent concepts
Formal Operations	11+	Theoretical, hypothetical, and counterfactual thinking. Abstract logic and reasoning. Strategy and planning become possible. Concepts learned in one context can be applied to another.

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She wanted to give her mother a nice surprise and cut out a piece of sewing for her. But she didn't know how to use the scissors properly and cut a big hole in her dress. And a little girl called Margaret went and took her mother's scissors one day when her mother was out. She played with them for a bit. Then, as she didn't know how to use them properly, she made a little hole in her dress. The child is then asked, "Who is naughtier?" Typically younger children (pre-operational and early concrete operational i.e. up to age 9-10) say that Marie is the naughtier child. Although they recognize the distinction between a well-intentioned act that turns out badly and a careless, thoughtless or malicious act they tend to judge naughtiness in terms of the severity of the consequence rather than in terms of motives. This is what Piaget means by moral realism. Piaget was also interested in what children understand by a lie. Here he found that the seriousness of a lie is measured by younger children in terms of the size of the departure from the truth. So a child who said he saw a dog the size of an elephant would be judged to have told a worse lie than a child who said he saw a dog the size of a horse even though the first child is less likely to be believed. With regard to punishment Piaget also found that young children also had a characteristic view.

Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

- The Pramoral Period:** The first 5 years of life, when children are said to have little respect for or awareness of socially defined rules.
- Heteronomous Morality:** The 1st stage of moral development in which children view the rules of authority figures as sacred and unalterable.
- Autonomous Morality:** The 2nd stage of moral development, in which children realize that rules are arbitrary agreements that can be challenged and changed with the consent of the people they govern.

Firstly they saw the function of punishment as make the guilty suffer. Paint called this retributive justice (or expiatory punishment) because punishment is seen as an act of retribution or revenge. If you like young children have a very Old Testament view of punishment ("an eye for an eye").

Many Definitions of Character

- Berkowitz (2002) says character is made up of those personal characteristics that lead a person to do the right thing in a given situation as opposed to not doing the right thing.

Punishment is seen as a deterrent to further wrongdoing and the stricter it is the more effective they imagine it will be. They also believe in what Piaget called immanent justice (that punishment should automatically follow bad behavior). For example one story he told was of two children who robbed the local farmer's orchard (today we might take the example of children who robbed cars). The farmer saw the children and tried to catch them. One was caught and the farmer gave him a thrashing. The other, who could run faster, got away.

INTRODUCTION

- Piaget (1932) was principally interested not in what children do (i.e., in whether they break rules or not) but in what they think.
- In other words he was interested in children's moral reasoning.
- Piaget was interested in three main aspects of children's understanding of moral issues. They were
 - Children's understanding of rules. This leads to questions like
 - Where do rules come from?
 - Can rules be changed?
 - Who makes rules?
 - Children's understanding of moral responsibility. This leads to questions like
 - Who is to blame for "bad" things?
 - Is it the outcome of behavior that makes an action "bad"?
 - Is there a difference between accidental and deliberate wrongdoing?
 - Children's understanding of justice. This leads to questions like
 - Should the punishment fit the crime?
 - Are the guilty always punished?
- Piaget found that children's ideas regarding rules, moral judgements and punishment tended to change as they got older.
- In other words just as there were stages to children's cognitive development so also there were universal stages to their moral development.

However on the way home this child had to cross the stream on a very slippery log. This child fell off the log and cut his leg badly. Now when you ask younger children why the boy cut his leg they don't say, "because the log was slippery," they say, "because he stole from the farmer". In other words young children interpret misfortune as if it were some kind of punishment from God of from some kind of supernatural force. For young children justice is seen as in the nature of things. The guilty in their view are always punished (in the long run) and the natural world is like a policeman. Piaget (1932) described the morality described above as heteronomous morality. This means a morality that is formed out of being subject to another's rules. Of course, for young children, these are the rules that adults impose upon them. It is thus a morality that comes from unilateral respect. That is to say the respect children owe to their parents, teachers and others. However, as children get older the circumstances of their lives change and their whole attitude to moral questions undergoes a radical change. An example of this is how children respond to a question about the wrongdoing of a member of their peer group.

PIAGET'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Very easy and detailed explanation

Young children typically "tell" on others. They believe their primary obligation is to tell the truth to an adult when asked to do so. Older children typically believe that their first loyalty is to their friends and you don't "grass" on your mates. This would be one example of the two moralities of the child. Autonomous Morality (9-10 yrs) The stage of autonomous morality is also known as moral relativism – morality based on your own rules. Children recognize there is no absolute right or wrong and that morality depends on intentions not consequences. Piaget believed that around the age of 9-10 children's understanding of moral issues underwent a fundamental reorganisation. By now they are beginning to overcome the egocentrism of middle childhood and have developed the ability to see moral rules from other people's point of view. A child who can decentre to take other people's intentions and circumstances into account can move to making the more independent moral judgements of the second stage. As a result children's ideas on the nature of rules themselves, on moral responsibility and on punishment and justice all change and their thinking becomes more like that of adults. Children now understand that rules do not come from some mystical "divine-like" source. People make rules and people can change them – they are not inscribed on tablets of stone. With regard to the "rules of the game" older children recognise that rules are needed to prevent quarrelling and to ensure fair play. Indeed sometimes they even become quite fascinated with the whole issue and will for example discuss the rules of board games (like chess, Monopoly, cards) or sport (the off-side rule) with all the interest of a lawyer. They also recognise that rules can be changed if circumstances dictate (e.g. "You've got one player less so we will give you a three goal start") and if everybody agrees. With regard to issues of blame and moral responsibility older children don't just take the consequences into account they also consider motives. Children begin to realize that if they behave in ways that appear to be wrong, but have good intentions, they are not necessarily going to be punished. Thus for them a well-intentioned act that turned out badly is less blameworthy than a malicious act that did no harm. So in the previous research study children of 10 and over typically consider Margaret the naughtier child. Although Marie made a much bigger hole in her dress she was motivated by the desire to please her mother whereas Margaret may have caused less damage but did not act out of noble intentions. It all goes to show, in Piaget's opinion, that children are now able to appreciate the significance of subjective facts and of internal responsibility. Children's views on lying also change. The seriousness of a lie is judged in terms of betrayal of trust. They now recognise that all lies are not the same and, for example, you might tell a "white lie" in order to spare someone's feelings. They also recognise that if someone says something that they know not to be the case this doesn't necessarily mean the other person is telling a lie. It could be that they made a mistake or that this is a difference of opinion. Overall lying is now considered wrong not because you get punished for it by adults (the younger children's view) but because it is a betrayal of trust and undermines friendship and co-operation. With regard to punishment the emphasis now moves from retribution to restitution. It's purpose is not primarily to make the guilty suffer but to put things right again. In other words punishment should be aimed at helping the offender understand the harm (s)he has caused so that (s)he will not be motivated to repeat the offence and, wherever possible, punishment should fit the crime – say for example when a vandal is required to make good the damage (s)he has caused. Older children also recognise that justice in real life is an imperfect system. Sometimes the guilty get away with their crimes and sometimes the innocent suffer unfairly. For younger children collective punishment is seen as acceptable. For example they would not disagree with a whole class being punished for the misdeeds of a single child. For the older children it is always considered wrong to punish the innocent for the misdeeds of the guilty. Overall Piaget describes the morality of the older child as an autonomous morality i.e. a morality that is subject to its own laws. The change is partly seen as a result of the child's general cognitive development partly due to declining egocentrism and partly to the growing importance of the peer group. The reference group for children's moral beliefs is increasingly focused on other children and disputes between equals need to be negotiated and compromises made. In place of the unilateral respect the younger children owed to their parents an attitude of mutual respect governs relations between peers. Critical Evaluation Piaget's theory of children's moral development can be seen as an application of his ideas on cognitive development generally. As such his theory here has both the strengths and weaknesses of his overall theory. 1. Reliability Piaget uses qualitative methods (observation and clinical interviews). His research is based on very small samples. His methods are not standardised and therefore not replicable. It is impossible to say from his research how generalizable the results are. His is exploratory research, which is useful for generating new ideas rather than for the rigorous testing of hypotheses. 2. Validity Is Piaget testing what he thinks he is testing? This isn't clear. For example in his story of the broken cups Piaget claims to find a difference in children's views of what is right or fair. However it may be that the answer the children give is based on their view of what would actually happen in such circumstances not what they think should happen. 3. Underestimating children's rate of development Piaget argues that the shift from "moral realism" to "moral relativism" occurs around the age of 9 to 10 and that children younger than this do not take motives into account when judging how much someone is to blame. Other research suggests that children develop an understanding of the significance of subjective facts at a much earlier age. Nelson (1980) found that even 3-year olds could distinguish intentions from consequences if the story was made simple enough. 4. What do children's replies to a story actually mean? This again isn't necessarily clear. Do they understand the story? Are they able to remember it correctly? Do they give the answer that they think will please the experimenter? Is their reply governed by the substantive aspects of the story (what actually happens) or by the moral principle embedded in it? 5. Does Piaget tell us what we want to know? Piaget's research is about children's moral reasoning. Many psychologists argue that what is far more important is not what children think about moral issues but how they actually behave. And we should not forget that there is no one-to-one relationship between attitudes and behavior. La Pierre (1934) proved that in his research with the Chinese couple driving around America. References LaPierre, R. T. (1934). Attitudes vs. actions. 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