Altruism and moral development; a study of the relationship between children's sharing behavior and level of moral development.

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ALTRUISM AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S SHARING BEHAVIOR AND LEVEL OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis Presented
By
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Psychology
ALTRUISM AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S SHARING BEHAVIOR AND LEVEL OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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This study investigated the relationship between children's level of moral reasoning and their willingness to share toys with an unknown peer. Seventy-one fifth grade boys served as subjects. All subjects were rated for level of moral reasoning on one of Kohlberg's moral dilemmas, using his standard scoring procedure (Kohlberg, 1973). Two weeks later, all subjects were given the sharing problem: to divide up four high and four low-value toys with an unknown peer. Subjects at higher stages of moral reasoning shared significantly more high-value toys than subjects at lower stages of moral reasoning.

It was found that subjects from high academic ability groups showed significantly higher levels of moral reasoning than subjects from lower ability groups. Analysis of sharing data, within ability groups, showed nonsignificant trends towards increased sharing by subjects at higher stages of moral development.

It was suggested that this positive relationship between level of moral reasoning and willingness to share may help to explain many age-related sharing differences reported.
in past research (e.g., Staub, 1968). However, future research is necessary to establish a "cause and effect" relationship between moral development and altruism.
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Figure 1. Age trends in moral judgments for three ages . . . 3
It is the tenet of this paper that many age-related changes in children's sharing behavior are accompanied by changes in moral development. Many studies have found a positive relationship between a child's age and his willingness to share. Midlarsky and Bryan (1967) found that third and fourth graders shared candy more often than first and second grade children. Handlon and Gross (1959) used preschool through sixth grade children in a study of altruism. The problem was to divide up five rewards with another child. They found a positive relationship between age and increased sharing. Walbek (1969) found that fifth grade children were more willing than second graders to donate certificates (worth a penny) to charity. Wright (1942b) had 8 and 11-year-olds share four high-value and four low-value toys with an anonymous peer. The 11-year-olds were more generous, giving up more of the high-value toys. Thus, there is experimental evidence that from age six to eleven there is a general increase in altruistic behavior.

Bryan and London (1970), in their review of altruistic behavior in children, have suggested that this age trend in generosity, "appears to accompany alterations in the basis of moral judgment" (Kohlberg, 1963). It is possible that older children are more generous than younger not only because of the greater opportunity to learn this culturally valued activity, but because they may be shifting the basis of moral
judgment from a hedonistic position to one emphasizing social approval ("the 'good-boy' morality" [Kohlberg, 1963]). However, there is no direct experimental evidence relating level of moral development to children's sharing behavior.

According to Kohlberg (1969a), during the elementary school years most children shift from stage 1 to stages 2 and 3 in moral development (see Figure 1). In the first stage of moral development, the child is essentially egocentric, his behavior is motivated by fear (obedience to avoid punishment orientation). However, in stage 2 reasoning the child has become aware of the "value of each other's needs and perspectives" (Kohlberg, 1969a). The child's orientation in moral decisions is one of 'exchange' or 'reciprocity.' This orientation is one in which

Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the market place. Elements of fairness, reciprocity, and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical, pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice. (Table 5, Kohlberg, 1973)

This change in the basis of moral judgments may explain the older child's increased generosity. However, if moral development level does influence children's sharing, there should be some evidence of 'sharing to maintain equality' or an 'exchange orientation' in older children's altruistic behavior.

Several studies (Staub, 1968; Ugurel-Semin, 1952; Willoughby and Callahan, 1972; Wright, 1942b) have found an 'exchange' or 'reciprocity' orientation in the sharing behavior
Fig. 1. Age trends in moral judgments for three ages. (From L. Kohlberg, The development of children's orientation toward a moral order: I. Sequence in the development of moral thought, *Vita Humana*, 1963, 6, 16.)
of children, ages 8 to 11. Wright (1942b) had 8-year-olds divide up four high-value and four low-value toys with an anonymous peer. These children tended to share two of each type toy. Ugurel-Semin (1952) had children from age 6 to 16 divide an unequal number of nuts with a peer. From age 8 on, there was an increasing emphasis on divisions that maintained equity. Some children even handed the extra nut back to the experimenter. Both of these studies show children's attempts to maintain equality in solutions to sharing problems. Staub (1968) found that fourth grade children shared less after they "succeeded" in a rigged bowling game, than after a "poor" performance. He suggested that the children had shared on the basis of a "norm of deservedness." It is possible that the children who were given superior scores on the game believed that they had earned their rewards and were subsequently less willing to share them. Those children who did "poorly" may have shared more often because they did not "earn" their rewards. They may have believed that they did not have a justifiable moral claim on the rewards. Willoughby and Callahan (1972) also found that fourth graders shared less after a "successful" performance on a difficult color matching task than after succeeding on an easy color matching task. Both of these studies show sharing that could be based on the "market place" orientation of Kohlberg's stage 2 (pay-off based on performance). The children who had worked hard
and succeeded earned their rewards and therefore were less likely to share them.

However, in the studies by Staub, Willoughby and Callahan, and Wright, fifth grade children did not share in the same way as fourth graders. The older children (age 11) in the studies by Staub and Willoughby shared more often after a "successful" performance on the bogus task than after a poor performance. Thus their sharing would not conform to an explanation on the basis of a "norm of deservedness."

Referring to Figure 1, it can be seen that at about age 11 the majority of children's responses to moral dilemmas are based on stage 3 and 4 moral reasoning. The sharing behavior changes between the fourth and fifth grade may be the result of the shift from stage 2 to stage 3 in moral development.

According to Kohlberg (1969a) in stage 3 "moral value resides in performing good or right roles, in maintaining the conventional order, and the expectancies of others." The child in this stage seeks to secure approval by assuming a "good-boy" role based on helping others. It is possible that the differences in sharing found in fifth grade children reflect decisions based on this "good-boy" orientation, rather than the "exchange" orientation in sharing found in fourth grade children. The fifth grade children who "succeeded" on the experimental tasks may have believed that they had established a positive image with the experimenter (based on task competency and praise from the experimenter). Their
increased sharing after success may be an attempt to maintain or complete this "good-boy" image (stage 3 reasoning, "perform good roles" and "maintain the expectancies of others"). The fifth grade children who "failed" on the task may have felt that they had established a poor image with the experimenter. This failure to establish the "good-boy" role may have led to the decreased sharing in the "failure condition." They did not have a "good-boy" image to maintain by sharing.

It is also possible that children at stage 3 of moral development may use sharing to establish the "good-boy" image if there is no experimental manipulation that determines their competency or worth. In the study by Wright (1942b), 11-year-old children were given the task of dividing up four high-value toys and four low-value toys with an anonymous peer. The children gave up more high-value than low-value toys. This generosity could be seen as an attempt to establish the "good-boy" with the experimenter or the peer.

Thus it does seem possible that changes in level of moral development may be reflected in the child's sharing behavior. The lower level of sharing found in the younger subjects (ages 6 and 7) of Handlon and Gross (1959), Midlarsky and Bryan (1967) and Walbek (1969) may reflect their egocentric orientation in moral reasoning. The trend in sharing of 8 to 10-year-olds (seen in the studies by Staub [1968], Ugurel-Semin [1952], Willoughby and Callahan [1972], and Wright [1942b]) seems to stress equality and/or exchange.
This would be consistent with the "market place" orientation of stage 2 moral reasoning. Finally, by the fifth grade, children may be sharing in order to maintain or establish the "good-boy" image of stage 3 moral reasoning. The differences in sharing, found in 11-year-olds by Staub (1968), Willoughby and Callahan (1972), and Wright (1942b), as compared to their 8 to 10-year-old subjects, may reflect the 11-year-olds' attempts to establish a "good-boy" image through sharing. Bryan and London (1970) state "If the norm of deservedness does dictate behaviors, then its operation is apparently extinct by the fifth grade. Unfortunately, no additional evidence is available concerning this hypothesis." The central purpose of the present study is to test the hypothesis that children's sharing behavior is related to level of moral development. If this is indeed the case, the changes in children's sharing behavior between the fourth and fifth grade may be related to changes in moral development.

The present study is essentially a replication of the Wright (1942b) study. Wright had 36 8-year-olds and 36 11-year-olds divide up four high-value and four low-value toys, to share with an anonymous peer. The divisions were classified as:

1. generous—gives up more than 2 high-value toys
2. fair—gives 2 high and 2 low-value toys
3. selfish—gives up less than 2 high-value toys
Wright found that the 8-year-olds' divisions tended to be fair and the 11-year-olds' divisions were more generous. This paper has suggested that the sharing differences found between 8 and 11-year-olds was accompanied by different levels of moral reasoning. The 8-year-olds may have been sharing on the basis of a moral system that stressed exchange and reciprocity (stage 2), while the 11-year-olds may have been sharing on the basis of a moral system that stressed being a "good-boy" (stage 3, approval orientation). In the present study, level of moral development rather than age was the independent variable.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were all (N=71) the fifth grade boys from three elementary schools. Fifth graders were chosen because past research (e.g., Staub, 1968) has shown that at about this age, a change in sharing behavior occurs. Also, according to Kohlberg (see Figure 1) this age group should yield approximately equal percentages of children in stages 2 and 3 of moral development.

Materials

Twenty fifth-grade boys, from a school not used in the final experiment, were asked to list the four toys they would most like to have, if they had to spend an afternoon alone in
an empty room. The four toys mentioned most often on these lists were designated high-value toys. They included: a Verti-Bird helicopter, Super Star Race Car, a Big Jim set, and Pendulum Pool. The average price of these toys was $12.00. Four low-value toys were selected by the experimenter. They were: an SSP race car, a Yo-Yo, Blockhead game, and a pinball game. The average cost of the low-value toys was $2.50.

To insure that those toys designated high-value were actually preferred, 10 different boys (ages 10 to 11) from the school not used for the final experimental sample were individually shown all eight toys and asked to pick the four toys they would most like to have if they had to spend an afternoon alone in an empty room. The four toys designated high-value were picked by all 10 subjects.

Administration and Scoring of Moral Development Scale

The subjects were individually tested for moral development level, using one of the dilemmas from Kohlberg's Moral Development Scale (1973). The complete form of the test consists of four moral judgment stories. Each story relates to an issue (or issues) which is scored separately for moral level. The issues for the complete form of the test are: life, conscience, law, honesty, affectional relationships and governance. The global moral maturity score is based on the average moral level for the six issues. Only one of the
dilemmas (Joe and His Father, see Appendix) was used for the present study. The decision to use only one dilemma was based on the following considerations.

1. The issues in "Joe and His Father" are central to the dependent variable under investigation, altruism. According to Kohlberg, responses to this story indicate moral level on issues of "relations of affection and altruism (concern for partner's welfare)" (Tables 1 and 4, Moral Development Scale, 1973).

2. The other stories deal with issues of life (stealing to save a life, euthanasia), sex, and civil rights. These issues are not 'central' to the present study.

3. For this study the global moral maturity score is not essential. Even if this score was obtained, the subject's score on the subtest for altruism would be the appropriate measure for this experiment.

Scoring of moral level: The subjects' responses to questions about the dilemma were taped and independently rated by two judges; using Kohlberg's manual for standard scoring. According to the procedure established in the manual, only those points were scored which "correspond to a point in the manual. This means that some points made by the subject will be left unscored" (Kohlberg, 1973). Evidence of moral level on an
issue was established if two distinct ideas were found corresponding to stage-specific responses in the manual. If the subject made the same point twice in response to different questions, it was still only counted once. After finding two examples of stage 1 reasoning or exhausting the protocol on an issue, the subjects' responses were checked for evidence of stage 2 reasoning. The scoring continued in this manner until a stage was reached on which the subject showed no responses.

If two stage-specific points could not be found at a stage, then responses were checked for ambiguous-stage points. "Ambiguous points, as included in the manual, are reasoning which is basically at a given stage but which contain some elements of a lower stage. Ambiguous points should only be included when two stage-specific points can not be found" (Kohlberg, 1973).

Moral level of individual subjects were scored according to the procedure established in the scoring manual. Pure Stages—If a subject has two stage-specific points at a higher stage, and two stage-specific points at a lower stage, he is at the higher stage on that issue, e.g., $2;2$, scored 3. Mixed Stages—If a subject has two stage-specific points at a lower stage and one stage-specific point or two ambiguous points at a higher stage, he is scored at a mixed stage. Using this procedure the two judges scored the subjects as being at one of the following stages:
1. Pure stage 3—at least two distinct stage 3 specific responses.

2. Mixed stage 2/3—some evidence of stage 3 reasoning, but not two distinct stage 3 responses.

3. Pure stage 2—two distinct stage 2 specific responses, but no evidence of stage 3 reasoning.

Responses to the moral dilemma were rated independently by two judges. The judges agreed on moral stage for 68 of the 71 subjects. The three subjects on which the judges disagreed were included in the mixed stage group, since the main experimental comparison was sharing levels of children at stages 2 and 3 of moral reasoning.

Procedure

All 71 subjects were individually tested for level of moral development. Two weeks later the subjects were tested on the sharing problem, by the same experimenter. The subjects were brought individually to the testing room. The position of the toys was randomized for each subject. The subjects were told . . .

I want you to pretend that you are going to have to spend all afternoon, alone, in an empty room.

Take a look at the eight toys on the table.

You will be allowed to take four of these into the room to play with while you wait.

There will also be another boy your age, who will have to spend the afternoon, alone, in another room.

The four toys that you do not take will be given to this boy to play with, while he waits.

Show me the four toys you would take for yourself.
Since the toys the subject shared might have been effected by any previous experience he'd had with them, the subjects were asked if they had any of the toys on the table at home. The subject was then instructed not to tell anyone which toys he had selected until the end of testing. Where possible, data on two additional measures, cognitive ability and socioeconomic level, was collected.

Kohlberg (1969a) has suggested that moral development is closely related to cognitive development. In two of the schools (N-61) the subjects were grouped according to ability level (top, middle, and low). The subject's group placement was used as a measure of cognitive ability, in order to investigate the possible relationship between cognitive ability and moral development.

Data on economic level was collected to determine if subjects shared differentially based on economic level rather than level of moral reasoning. Subjects receiving free lunch at school were designated "low-economic." These subjects were included in the main experimental analysis, and their sharing was also analyzed separately.

Results

Sharing. It was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between level of moral reasoning and the number of high-value toys shared. Table 1 shows the sharing classifications for subjects at the three moral
stages. Sharing was classified as either fair, shared two or more high-value toys, or selfish, shared less than two high-value toys. The sharing category, generous, was not used for analysis because of the low incidence of this type of sharing (less than 10% of the subjects shared more than two high-value toys; of the 7 "generous" subjects, 4 were at stage 3, 2 at stage 2/3, and 1 at stage 2). A 2 x 3 Chi square (2 types of sharing by 3 stages of moral reasoning) showed significant differences in sharing for subjects at different moral stages (Chi square = 6.63, P. < .05, 2 df).

Subjects at higher stages of moral development shared more high-value toys than subjects at lower stages of moral development.

**TABLE 1**

Types of Sharing for Subjects at Different Moral Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Type of Sharing</th>
<th>% high-value toys shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2/3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 6.63, P. < .05, 2 df.
It was believed that if a subject had any of the high-value toys at home, this might affect his sharing behavior. Therefore, all subjects were asked if they had any of the high-value toys at home. Only eight subjects reported having any of these toys. Due to the small number of subjects, no statistical analysis was performed on the data. Table 2 summarizes the data for this group of subjects.

**TABLE 2**

Moral Stage and Type Sharing for Subjects Who Owned at Least One High-Value Toy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Type of Sharing</th>
<th>% high-value toys shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2/3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic ability and moral development.** Kohlberg (1969a) has suggested that the rate of moral development is related to cognitive development. Two schools (N = 61) had students divided into three academic ability groups. A 3 x 3 Chi square (3 ability groups by 3 moral stages) was done to check on the possible relationship between academic ability and level of moral development. Subjects from higher ability groups showed significantly higher levels of moral reasoning (Chi square = 16.47, P < .01, 4 df). Table 3 shows the number
of subjects at each moral stage for the three ability groups.

TABLE 3

Number of Subjects at Each Moral Stage for Three Ability Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability Level</th>
<th>Moral Stage</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2/3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 16.47, P. < .01, 4 df.

Since moral level and ability level are confounded, additional analysis was necessary to determine if sharing behavior is related to moral development, independent of ability level. The relationship between moral stage and type of sharing was analyzed by 2 x 3 Chi squares (2 types of sharing by 3 moral stages) within ability levels. Table 4 shows the sharing by moral stage for three ability groups. Only in the high ability group does there seem to be a strong trend for a positive relationship between moral stage and increased sharing (Chi square = 4.65, P. < .10, 2 df). However, because of the small cell frequencies for the three chi squares within ability grouping, great caution must be used in any interpretation of the results.
### TABLE 4

Type of Sharing by Moral Stage for Subjects in Three Ability Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Stage</th>
<th>High Ability</th>
<th>Middle Ability</th>
<th>Low Ability</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2/3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High Ability - Chi square = 4.65, P < .10, 2df.
Middle Ability - Chi square = 1.84, P < .40, 2df.
Low Ability - Chi square = 5.10, P < .10, 2df.
Economic level. Eleven subjects received free lunch at school and were classified as "low-economic." Table 5 shows the type of sharing by moral stage for "low-economic" subjects.

**TABLE 5**

Types of Sharing by Moral Stage for Low-Economic Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Stage</th>
<th>Type of Sharing</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% high-value toys shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2/3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 7.42, P. < .05, 2df.

Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that children's sharing behavior is related to moral development. Subjects at higher stages of moral development shared more high-value toys than subjects at lower stages.

However, the results do not replicate those of Wright (1942b). In Wright's study, 8-year-olds tended to share two of each of the high and low-value toys. This was consistent with Kohlberg's stage 2 reasoning (exchange or reciprocity orientation). Wright's 11-year-olds gave up more high-value
toys than they kept. This would be consistent with Kohlberg’s stage 3 reasoning (approval orientation). In the present study 11-year-olds at stage 3 shared two of each type toy, while 11-year-olds at stage 2 shared on the average only one of the four high-value toys. The differences in sharing between the studies, was probably due to differences in the incentive value of the high and low-value toys used. Unfortunately Wright’s study was reported only in abstract form, and the author did not report either the types of toys used, or the differences between high and low-value toys.

However, the differences in incentive value cannot completely explain why children at stage 2 of moral reasoning shared on the average only one of the high-value toys. According to Kohlberg’s theory, children at stage 2 should have shown a more equitable solution to the sharing problem. Thus, although there is a positive relationship between moral stage and increased sharing, the type of sharing shown by subjects at stage 2 (selfish) is not consistent with the reciprocity or exchange orientation of that moral stage. It appears that moral action (sharing) is not necessarily consistent with level of moral reasoning.

As expected, moral stage was positively related to level of cognitive ability. Higher academic ability subjects showed significantly higher levels of moral reasoning. Since moral stage and academic ability were confounded, the subject’s sharing was analyzed within ability level. Among
high ability subjects there was a strong trend towards increased sharing at higher moral stages (P. < .10). A similar, although much weaker relationship was found among middle ability subjects (P. < .40). A strong trend towards differential sharing by moral stage was found among low ability subjects (P. < .10). However, in the low ability group, the strong trend was probably due to the high rate of 'fair' divisions among stage 2 subjects. Thus this result could not be used to support the hypothesis of a positive relationship between moral development and sharing. However, the chi square analysis used above is not extremely reliable in cases with small cell frequencies. Thus further research, controlled for ability and with a larger sample, will be necessary to confirm the relationship between moral development and sharing behavior.

Economic level did not seem to be an important factor in the level of moral reasoning. Table 5 shows that there is about the same distribution in moral stages and type of sharing for this group as in the whole sample. Also there was a significant positive relationship between stage of moral reasoning and level of sharing (again there were very small cell frequencies).

In conclusion, the study does suggest that level of moral development is related to children's sharing behavior. Children at higher stages of moral development were more willing to give up high value toys to a peer. It is possible
that the changes in children's sharing behavior, between the fourth and fifth grade, reported by Staub (1968) are related to changes in moral development. It must be left to future research to determine if this relationship between moral development and sharing exists independently of academic ability, but the present study lends tentative support for that position. Also, this study suggests that the age-related increases in children's sharing behavior, reported in past research (e.g., Ugurel-Semin, 1952), may be the result of changes in level of moral development. However, a cause and effect relationship between moral level and sharing would have to be verified by future research.
APPENDIX

Moral Dilemma, Joe and His Father

Joe is a 14-year-old boy who wanted to go to camp very much. His father promised him he could go if he saved up the money for it himself. So Joe worked hard at his paper route and saved up the 40 dollars it cost to go to camp and a little more besides. But just before camp was going to start his father changed his mind. Some of his father's friends decided to go on a special fishing trip, and Joe's father was short of the money it would cost. So he told Joe to give him the money he had saved up from the paper route. Joe didn't want to give up going to camp, so he thought of refusing to give his father the money.

Questions

1. Should Joe refuse to give his father the money? Why?
2. What would be the most important reason for refusing his father the money?
3. What would be the most important reason for giving his father the money?
4. Who has the right to the trip and the money, the son or the father? Why?
5. What should be the authority of a father over a son in this case or in general? Why? What is the base of it?
6. What should a son do for his father here or in general, what if anything does a son owe his father? Why? What is its basis?
7. In terms of fairness, what is the important issue in this story?
8. Why should a promise be kept, by the father or by anyone?
9. Which is worse, if a son breaks his promise to his father or a father breaks his promise to a son? Why?
10. Is there any way in which the father has a right to tell his son to give him the money? Why?
11. What is the most important thing a good father should recognize in his relation to his son? Why that?
3a. What is the most important thing a good son should recognize in his relation to his father? Why that?

1b. Why should promises be kept?

2b. What makes a person feel bad if a promise is broken?

3b. Why is it important to keep a promise to someone you don't know well or are not close to?
References


