

Children's Concept of Forgiveness

Authors : Lida Landicho, Analiza R. Adarlo, Janine Mae V. Corpuz, Joan C. Villanueva

Abstract : Testing the idea that the process of forgiveness is intrinsically different across diverse relationships, this study examined whether forgiveness can already be facilitated by children ages 4-6. Two different intervention sessions which consists of 40 children (half heard stories about unfair blame and half heard stories about a double standard (between subjects variable) was completed. Investigators performed experimental analyses to examine the role of forgiveness in social and familial context. Results indicated that forgiveness can already be facilitated by children. Children see scenarios on double standard to be more unfair than normal scenarios (Scenario 2 (double standard) (M=7.54) Scenario 1 (unfair blame) (M=4.50), Scenario 4 (double standard) (M=7.) Scenario 3 (getting blamed for something the friend did) (M=6.80) $p < .05$. The findings confirmed that children were generally willing to grant forgiveness to a mother even though she was unfair, but less so to a friend. Correlations between sex, age and forgiveness were analyzed. Significant relationships was found on scenarios presented and caring task scores ($r_{xy} = -.314$). Their tendency to forgive was related to dispositional and situational factors.

Keywords : forgiveness, situational and dispositional factors, familial context, social context

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