

The Development of the Coherence of Moral Thinking

Authors : Hui-Tzu Lin, Wen-Ying Lin, Jenn-Wu Wang

Abstract : The purpose of present research is to investigate whether the global coherence of moral thinking is increased by age. The author utilized two kinds of moral situations to evaluate the subjects' responses to two contradictive arguments concerning behavior of stealing, cheating in an exam, each with two stories. The two stories will be focused on the main lead and provided two contradictory moral evaluations. Participants were 596 primary schoolchildren in Taiwan. The three age groups were 201 in grade two, 183 in grade three, and 212 in grade six. The result showed that sixth graders' moral judgment is more coherent than third graders'. The coherence of moral thinking is increased by age which support the implication by Piaget and Kohlberg's theoretical hypothesis. This indicates that people higher ability to detect contradiction may be involved in the development of the coherence of moral thinking.

Keywords : moral thinking, coherence, local coherence, contradiction, global coherence, cognitive development

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