NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

ECE 120

Development of Appropriate Skills in Children

Module 4

ECE 120 (Development of Appropriate Skills in Children) Module 4

Course Developer/Writer
Dr. E. A. Oduolowu, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Course Editor
Dr. R. O. Akinbote, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Course Coordinator
Dr. Gbenga Ojo, National Open University of Nigeria

Credits of cover-photo: Henry Ude, National Open University of Nigeria

National Open University of Nigeria - 91, Cadastral Zone, Nnamdi Azikiwe Express Way, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria

Unit 1 Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

1.0 Introduction

Moral development is a complex issue. It is an important part of the emotional-social aspect of personality. It is also part of cognitive domain. Moral development concerns the basis on which children make judgments that an act is right or wrong. Estes defines it as the ability to reason and make decision in social situations. It is also an affective domain component. In this unit, we shall be examining Jean Piaget's stages of moral development.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define moral development
- discuss Piaget's stages of moral development.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 An Overview of Moral Development

Jean Piaget was one of the human theorists that explored moral development and moral reasoning within the context of cognitive development. He believed that the ways in which individuals perceive and understand situations affect their interpretation of morality.

For many years, Piaget observed children playing games such as marbles and making judgements on the seriousness of the wrong of characters in stories. On the basis of these observations, he concluded that children's moral judgements develop in two major overlapping stages; moral realism and autonomous morality.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Express Jean Piaget's opinion about moral reasoning.

2. How many stages did Piaget propose in his theory?

3.2 Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

In Piaget's opinion, moral reasoning undergoes the same cognitive development pattern around the world. He believed that children in the sensorimotor and pre-operational stages of cognitive development who rely on perception rather than logic to build their understanding of the world are in their pre-normal stage of moral development. The moral considerations that children weigh at a given age are likely to reflect the values of the social and cultural settings in which they are being reared.

The Stage of Moral Realism

The first stage of Piaget's moral development is usually referred to as the stage of moral realism or of objective morality. The stage emerges between ages 5 and 6. Children consider behaviour to be correct when it confirms to authority or to the rules of the game. At this age, children perceive rules as embedded in the structure of things. Rules to them reflect ultimate reality. The children see right rules and wrong as absolute. They are not seen as deriving from people to meet their social needs.

Although children are less egocentric at the stage of development; perspectives are still dependent on concrete experiences so they continue to make decisions about morality based on positive or negative consequences rather than on intentions. They align moral behaviours according to the degree of parental punishment. They view rules and consequences as absolute and inflexible; for example, five or six year old children who lie or steal usually believe that they will be found out or at least punished for their immoral acts.

The Stage of Autonomous Morality

Piaget (1965) found that when a child reaches the age of 9 to 11, they begin to show autonomous morality. They understand that rules are social decisions subject to revision through the cooperation of interested parties. They come to view social rules as arbitrary agreements that can be changed. They automatically no longer view obedience to authority figures as right. They realise that circumstances can require breaking rules.

Implications: Children who show autonomous morality are capable of flexible operational thought. They can focus on multiple dimensions and so they consider not only social rules but also the motives of the wrongdoer. They also show a greater capacity to take the point of view of others to empathise with them. Decentration and increased empathy brought children to weigh the intentions of the wrongdoer more heavily than the amount of damage done.

Piaget (1965), believed that autonomous morality can be created through egalitarian relationships as children interact with others and see that different people have different rules. There is a gradual shift to morality cooperation as children come to understand that people make rules and people can change them.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. At what age do children enter the stage of moral realism?

2. Explain the concept of moral cooperation.

4.0 Conclusion

Children develop a sense of right and wrong at preoperational stage. Their moral development is tied to moral reasoning, their thinking about right and wrong, and their active construction of moral judgement.

5.0 Summary

Piaget identified two stages of moral development. This includes moral realism, and autonomous morality. Moral realism is a stage when children make decisions on positive or negative consequences rather than on intentions. Autonomous morality is the second stage of Piaget's stages of morality. In this stage, children base moral judgements on the intentions of the wrongdoer and on the amount of damage done. Social rules are viewed as agreements that can be charged.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Define the following concepts:- pre-moral stage, moral realism and autonomous morality.

2. Explain the rationale for the decision of 10 year old child on social justice.

3. What are the implications of autonomous morality?

7.0 References/Further Reading

Piaget, J. (1965). *The Moral Judgement of the Child*. New York: Free Press.

Siegler, R.S. (1998*). Children's Thinking*. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Wink, J. & Putney, I. (2002). *A Vision of Vygotsky*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Unit 2 Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning

1.0 Introduction

In toddlerhood, children tend to use rewards and punishments as their primary criteria for figuring out if their actions or those of another child are right or wrong. They determine that actions that are praised by adults are "good" and those that they are corrected are "wrong". As they grow, they discover that not all transgressions are treated equally.

As a result of many such experiences, they begin to make distinctions between moral violations such as lying, stealing, hurting others and social - conventional interactions such as poor table manners, greeting someone improperly, speaking, rudely. By the age of 5 and 6, they classify some actions as "very wrong" if they result in physical harm to people, e.g. hitting people or breaking things.

Children categorise actions that disrupt the social order of the group such as forgetting to say "please" as "not very wrong". Older children use more sophistication reasoning in thinking about rules and expectations. They expand their definitions of hurtful behaviour beyond physical actions to include psychological impacts such as hurting people's feelings or betraying as hurting people's feelings or betraying secrets, etc. They recognise the need for maintaining some form of social order to protect the rights of individuals and groups.

In this unit, we shall discuss how Kohlberg (1969), evaluated the moral reasoning of both children and adults by presenting them with moral dilemmas.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define moral dilemmas
- explain Kohlberg's levels and stages of moral development.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Kohlberg's Background

Lawrence Kohlberg was born in Bronx, New York. He was known for his research in the psychology of the development of children. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is based in part on Piaget's ideas that we discussed in Unit 1. His theory is frequently used to explain how children view morality.

According to Kohlberg (1969), morality develops in stages, each successive level representing a more mature form of reasoning. After a careful study of the responses of many persons to different imaginary moral dilemmas, moral dilemmas are situations in which no choice is clearly and indisputably right. Kohlberg divided moral development into three sequential levels:

1. a pre-conventional moral reasoning: here judgement is based solely on a person's own needs and perceptions

2. conventional: where the expectations of society and law are taken into account; and

3. post-conventional: here judgements are based on abstract, more personal principles of justice that are not necessarily defined by society's laws.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Where was Lawrence Kohlberg born?

2. Identify the similarity between Piaget's theory of moral reasoning and Kohlberg's theory.

3. What is moral dilemma?

3.2 Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Moral Development

Table 1: Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Moral Reasoning

Level of Moral Reasoning	Stage of Moral Reasoning	Characteristics
Pre-Conventional Level Typically begins in Early Childhood	1. Punishment – obedience orientation 2. Personal reward/instrumental orientation	• Rules are obeyed to avoid punishment. • A good or bad action is determined by its physical consequences. The goal is to avoid punishment. • Personal needs determine right and wrong. • Favours are returned along the lines of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours". • The goal is gaining personal advantage or reward.
Conventional Level Typically begins in Middle Childhood	3. Good boy - Nice girl orientation 4. Law–and–order orientation	• Good means "nice". It is determined by what pleases, aids and is approved by others. It is based on the expectations and approval of others. • Moral behaviour helps others and socially approved. • Laws are absolute. • Authority must be respected and the social order must be maintained. • Feel an obligation or duty to follow the rules.
Post-Conventional Level Typically begins in	5. Contractual, legalistic or social contract	• Consider the larger needs of society over personal needs.

adolescence	orientation	
	6. Universal Ethical Principle Orientation	• Good and right are matters of individual conscience and involves abstract concepts of justice, human dignity and equality.

Source: Rathus, A. Spencer (2006). *Childhood: Voyages in Development*

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. How many levels of moral reasoning does Kohlberg's morality reasoning theory have?

2. How many stages are there in all?

3. Describe one of the characteristics of the "good-boy-nice-girl" orientation stage.

3.3 Pedagogic Implications of Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning

In Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning, there is evidence that the different levels of reasoning identified do form a hierarchy with each stage showing advancement in reasoning over the one before.

However, his stage theory has been criticised, that in reality, the stages do not seem to be separate, sequenced and consistent. That people often give reasons for moral choices that reflect several different stages simultaneously. Moreover, it is observed in everyday life, making moral choices involves more than reasoning. Emotions, competing goals, relationships and practical considerations all affect choices.

Despite the criticisms, Kohlberg has contributed to classroom practice by considering the issue of how education can raise the level of morality. He took the position that children do not acquire new levels of moral behaviour whether by being told what to do or how to behave or by being corrected.

According to him, at each stage, the individual has to discover the possibility to new ways of thinking about morality and the discoveries will permit him/her to move to the next level. What the teacher has to do is to provide the conditions that permit children to manage these discoveries themselves.

4.0 Conclusion

Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning are frequently used to explain how children view morality. There are evidences that the stages of morality are not culturally determined in the sense that different cultures might produce a different series of stages. As with the taxonomies having a relationship to the theory of Piaget, the assumption is made that a person has to complete each stage before he can proceed to the next stage.

5.0 Summary

Kohlberg is known for his research in the psychology of moral development of children. He based his theory in part on Piaget's ideas of cognitive development. Kohlberg developed a

detailed sequence of stages of moral reasoning or judgement about right and wrong. He divided moral development into three levels: (i) pre-conventional (2) conventional and (3) post conventional.

Pre-conventional level is a period during which moral judgements are based largely on expectations of rewards or punishment. The conventional level is a period during which moral judgements largely reflect social rules and conventions while the post-conventional level is a period during which moral judgements are derived from moral principles and people look to themselves to set moral standards.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is Kohlberg's theory of moral development?
2. Describe the characteristics of children at the conventional levels of moral reasoning.
3. What are the criticisms of Kohlberg's moral reasoning?
4. What are the implications on educating children?

7.0 References/Further Reading

Estes, L.S. (2004). *Essentials of Child Care and Early Education*. USA: Pearson Education Inc.

Rathus, Spencer A. (2006). *Childhood: Voyages in Development.* (2nd ed.). China: Thomson Wadsworth.

Woolfolk, Anita (2010). *Educational Psychology* (11th ed.*).* Hong Kong: Pearson Education North Asia Ltd.