

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Engineering Ethics - Moral Psychology

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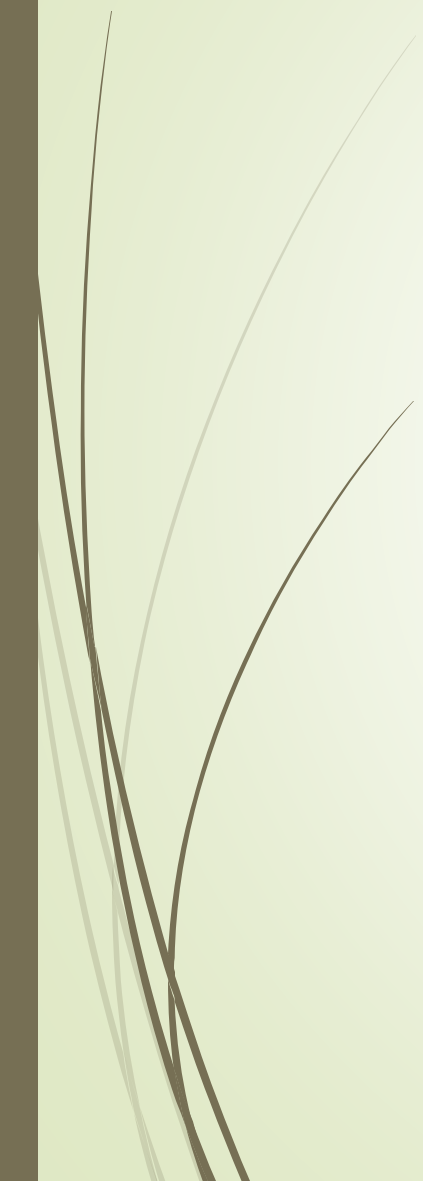
Introduction



- Lawrence Kohlberg was a professor at Harvard University known for his work on developmental psychology.
- He developed a theory of moral development based on the ideas of Piaget, Dewey, and Baldwin.



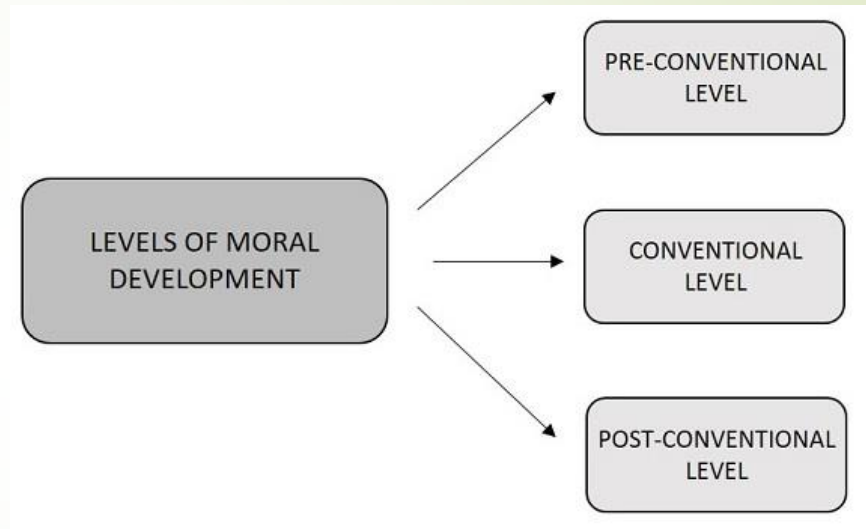
Kohlberg's Theory Overview

- Kohlberg proposed that moral reasoning develops through a progressive sequence of stages.
 - Moral judgments evolve from consequences in early childhood to justice in adulthood.
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Three Levels of Moral Development

1. Pre-conventional Level
2. Conventional Level
3. Post-conventional Level

➔ Each level consists of two sub-stages of moral reasoning.



Pre-conventional Level

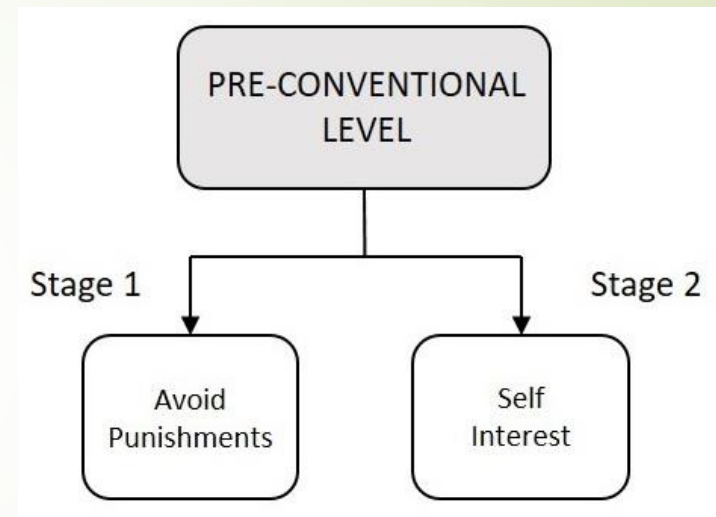
- Found at the elementary school level. Focus is on direct consequences of actions.

Stage 1: Avoid Punishment

- Obedience to authority to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Self-interest

- Right behavior means acting in one's own best interest.



Conventional Level

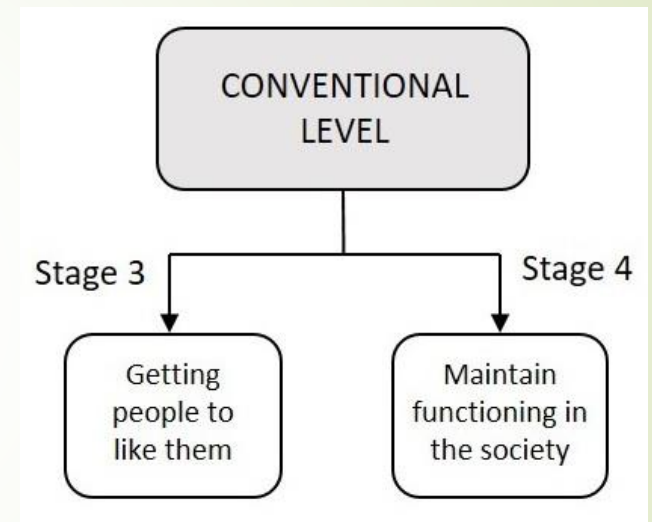
- Common at primary and high school levels. Focus is on pleasing others and maintaining order.

Stage 3: Getting People to Like Them

- Behavior guided by desire to gain approval.

Stage 4: Maintain Functioning in Society

- Following rules for the benefit of society.



Post-conventional Level

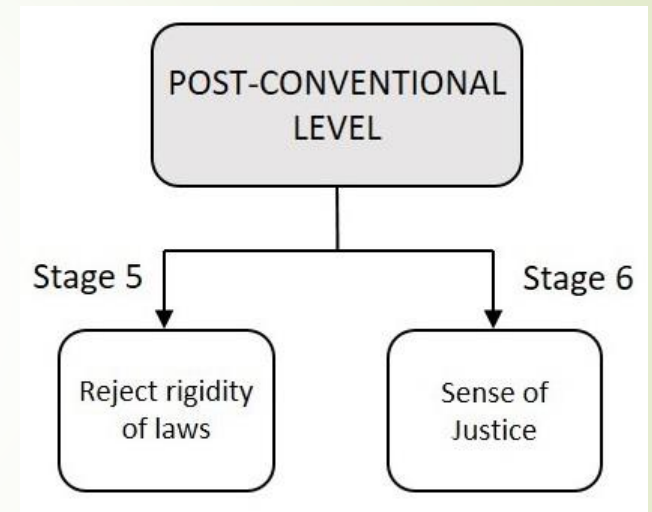
- Typically found in adulthood. Focus is on universal principles and justice.

Stage 5: Reject Rigidity of Laws

- Emphasis on moral reasoning over strict laws.

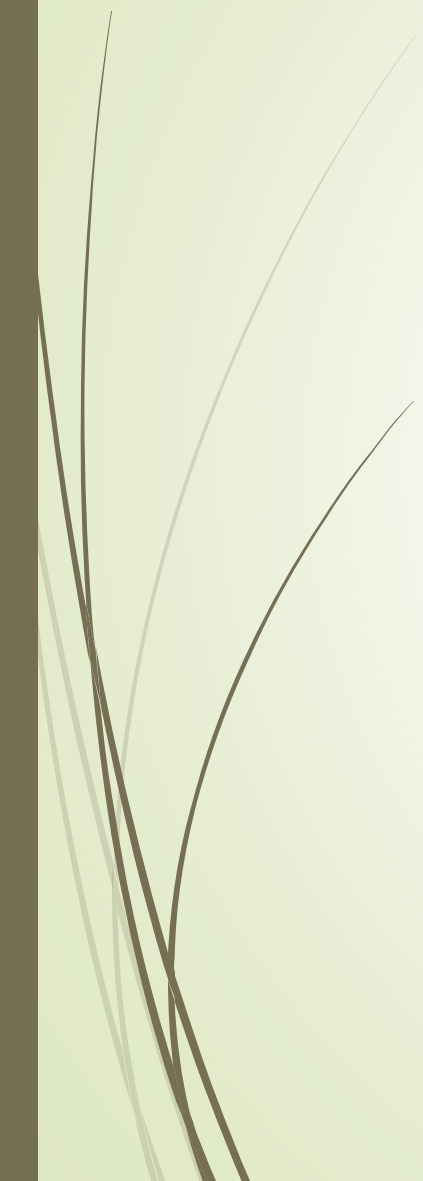
Stage 6: Sense of Justice

- Guided by inner ethical principles, regardless of external influence.





Moral Judgment Process

- Judgment is made by the thinker about the protagonist in a scenario.
 - Each stage reflects how the thinker evaluates right and wrong.
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Summary of Kohlberg's Theory

- Six stages across three levels
- From obedience and punishment to justice and universal ethics
- Moral development reflects how individuals understand and apply ethics over time.



Conclusion

- Kohlberg's theory emphasizes the evolution of ethical thinking.
 - It is foundational in understanding moral reasoning in engineering ethics and beyond.
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