Chapter Two: Theories of moral development and moral character

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Objective

At the end of this chapter you could be able to understand

- Theories of Moral Development
- Moral Identity and Moral Character

2.1.Theories of moral development

- Moral identity is the degree to which being a moral person is important to a person's identity.

- Moral development is the process throught which persons, children develop proper attitudes and behaviors toward other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules, and laws.

- Moral development refers to the process whereby people form a progressive sense of what is right and wrong, proper and improper.

- **Moral development** focuses on the emergence, change, and understanding of morality from infancy through adulthood.
- Morality develops across a lifetime and is influenced by an individual's experiences and their behavior when faced with moral issues through different periods' physical and cognitive development.
- In short, morality concerns an individual's growing sense of what is right and wrong; it is for this reason that young children have different moral judgment and character than that of a grown adult.

- Morality in itself is often a synonym for "rightness" or "goodness". It refers to a certain code of conduct that is derived from one's culture, religion or personal philosophy that guides one's actions, behaviors and thoughts.

2.1.Theories of Moral Development

- Piaget's Cognitive Development
- Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development,

- Gilligan's Theory of Women's Moral Development, and

- Rest's Neo Kohlbergian Approach

Piaget's Cognitive Development

Four Major Stages of Piaget's Cognitive Development

1. Sensorimotor (0-2 years)
2. Preoperational (2-7 years)
3. Concrete Operations (7-11 years)
4. Formal Operations (12+ years)

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- Kohlberg's theory of moral development explains how moral development takes place in human animals.

- Kohlberg's theory is regarded as a rationalist theory since it assumes that the main determinant of moral judgment is rational thinking processes, even though it is thought that emotional or intuitive processes are also involved – at least in part – in moral judgment.

Kohlberg´s Theory of Moral Development

- dominant for over forty years

- His theory, based on both psychology (Piaget) and moral philosophy (Rawls), is cognitive –developmental in nature.

- The empirical tie between moral and cognitive development is strong (Pascarella Terenzini, 2005);

- Focusing on the process of how individuals make moral judgments not the content of these decisions.

Kohlberg…

- Kohlberg was one of the first to study the moral development of adolescents and, later, college students.

- He examined the moral reasoning of adolescent boys and found their reasoning proceeded through invariant and qualitatively different stages.

- He identified three more advanced stages of thinking and revised the definitions of the three earlier stages that Piaget had identified.

Kohlberg…

- Three criteria frame Kohlberg 's stage theory (Walker, 1988).
  - The *structure criterion is the most fundamental of the* three characteristics.
    - At a given stage, individuals exhibit a similar reasoning pattern regardless of the content or situation.
  - The *sequence criterion indicates that stages* appear in a specific order, regardless of setting or experience (stages fixed).
    - not all will move through the stages at the same rate.

- The final stage characteristic is the *hierarchy criterion* .
  - *It states that each successive stage is more highly developed than* the previous one because it incorporates aspects of all earlier stages.

Kohlberg...

Kohlberg 's Stages of Moral Reasoning

- Moral reasoning develops through a six-stage sequence grouped into three levels (Kohlberg, 1976)

Level one .Preconvention /pre moral stage

Stage one .Obedience and punishment

Stage two .Individualism and exchange

Level two .Conventional

Stage three .Good interpersonal relationship

Stage four .Maintaining social order

Level three .Post conventional

Stage five .Social contract and individual rights

Stage six .Universal principles

Continued

- At level 1 (preconventional), individuals have not yet come to understand societal rules and expectations;
  - their perspective is concrete and individually focused.

Stage one : Obedience and punishment/ *Heteronomous Morality.* =The individual at the first stage does not understand or care that other people can have similar wishes and desires besides their own desires. Thus, the person in this stage acts in an egoist manner.

Stage Two: Individualism and exchange =The person realizes that she/he can differentiate her own desires from the wishes of other people and the authority figures.

- *Individuals at the second stage in the preconventional* level follow rules if it is in their interest to do so.
- They understand that other people have needs and interests that may <u>conflict</u> with their own, so right is defined by what is fair, an equal exchange, or an agreement.
- ensuring satisfaction of their own needs and wants, while minimizing the possibility of negative consequences to themselves.

Level 2 (conventional) is called the " member - of - society " perspective:

- individuals identify with the rules and expectations of others, especially authorities.

Stage Three: Good interpersonal relationship=the individual has a motivation that is concerned with mutual relations and expectations. The main motivation of the individuals at this level is to be accepted and socially approved by others.

- right is defined as meeting the expectations of those to whom one is close and carrying out appropriate, acceptable social roles (for example, son, friend).
- Concern centers on maintaining a "good person " image and gaining others ' approval

Stage four .Maintaining social order/Social system morality=people define interpersonal relations through their place in society. Individuals behave in a way that maintains the system and fulfills societal obligations.

Continued

- Level 3 (postconventional or principled) is labeled the "prior -to -society" perspective.
  - Individuals separate themselves from the rules and expectations of others and base their decisions on self - chosen principles.

- Justice and fairness

- Moral superiority is reaching this stage.

Kohlberg...

- *Stage 5: Human Rights and Social Welfare Morality*
  - *laws* and social systems are evaluated based on the extent to which they promote fundamental human rights and values.
  - The social system is understood as a freely entered social contract to protect members' rights and ensure the welfare of all.

- *Stage 6: Morality of Universalizable, Reversible, and Prescriptive General Ethical Principles .*
  - *In the second principled stage, morality involves equal consideration of the points of view of all involved in a moral situation.*
  - Decisions are based on universal generalizable principles that apply in all situations, for example, the equality of human rights.

Heinz dilemma

- Awoman was on her deathbed. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her.
- It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered.
- The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce.

Continued

- He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000 which is half of what it cost.

- He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it."

Continued

- So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's laboratory to steal the drug for his wife.

1. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

2. Would it change any thing if Heinz did not love his wife?

3. What if the person dying was astranger ,would it make any change?

4. Should the police arrest the chemist for murder if the woman died ?

Continued

Level one .Preconvention /pre moral stage
       Stage one .Obedience and punishment
Based on this level Mr. Heinz was wrong because stealing is wrong
        Stage two .Individualism and exchange
Based on this level Mr. Heinz was right because the law is unfair

Level two .Conventional
     Stage three .Good interpersonal relationship= the main motivation to be accepted socially, community sprite. Hence Mr. Heinz was right .
    Stage four .Maintaining social order
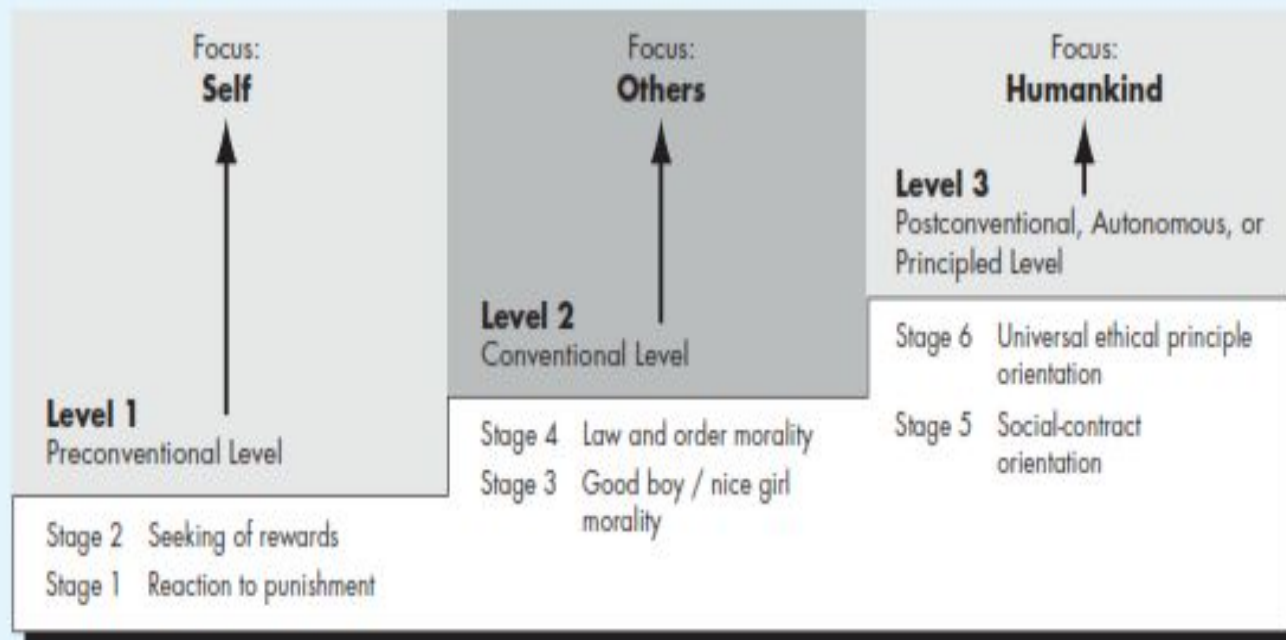Based on this level Mr. Heinz was wrong
Level three .Post conventional
    Stage five .Social contract and individual rights
    Stage six .Universal principles

Kohlberg...

Figure 7-13 *Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Development*

Focus: **Self**

Focus: **Others**

Focus: **Humankind**

Level 3
Postconventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level

Level 2
Conventional Level

Level 1
Preconventional Level

| Stage 6 | Universal ethical principle orientation |
| Stage 5 | Social-contract orientation |

| Stage 4 | Law and order morality |
| Stage 3 | Good boy / nice girl morality |

| Stage 2 | Seeking of rewards |
| Stage 1 | Reaction to punishment |

Gilligan's Theory of Women's Moral Development

- Prior to the popular and scholarly success of Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982/1993), human development theorists for the most part did not see women as a group worthy of psychological study.

- Freud's (1905/1965) research had begun a snowball "portrayal of women as deviants" (Kuk, 1992, p. 26) and set men as the standard by which to judge what was normal.

Findings about the moral development of women and disputed the previous models of human growth that did not fit women's experience.

- Gilligan (1977, 1982/1993) demonstrated that women identify care and responsibility as their moral compass.

- She proposed that women's moral development proceeds through a sequence of three levels and two transition periods, with each level identifying a more intricate relationship between self and others.

Gilligan...

- *Level 1: Orientation to Individual Survival . The individual is self - centered, preoccupied* with survival, and unable to distinguish between necessity and desire.

  – The goal at this level is to fulfill individual desires and needs for the purpose of preserving the self.

  – *First Transition: From Selfishness to Responsibility*

    - The criterion used for judging moral dilemmas shifts from Independence and selfishness to connection and responsibility.

Gilligan...

- *Level 2: Goodness as Self - Sacrifice .* *As the individual moves* *from a self – centered,* independent view of the world to one of richer engagement with and reliance on others, survival becomes social acceptance.

  – Seeking the paradox of self - definition and care for others, individuals at this level reflect conventional feminine values.

  – In fact, an individual may give up her own judgment in order to achieve consensus and remain in connection with others.

Gilligan…

- Disequilibrium arises over the issue of hurting others.
- Although conflict exists, it is typically not voiced in public but rather in private.

Gilligan…

- *Second Transition: From Goodness to Truth. Individuals question why they continue to put others first at their own expense in the second transition.*

  – During this time of doubt, individuals examine their own needs to determine if they can be included within the realm of responsibility.

  – However, the struggle " to reconcile the disparity between hurt and care " continues.

Gilligan...

- *Level 3: The Morality of Nonviolence .*
  - *The individual raises nonviolence, a moral mandate to avoid hurt, to the overriding principle that governs moral judgment and action.*
  - She is elevated to the principle of care by a " transformed understanding of self and a corresponding redefinition of morality " (Gilligan, 1977).
  - Through this second transformation, which now includes respect for the self, the dichotomization of selfishness and responsibility disappears.

Gilligan…

- At this time, individuals make moral judgment shifts from deciding in accordance with those around them to deciding by inclusion of their own needs on a par/balance with others.
- For the first time, the individual views examination of her needs as truth, not selfishness.
- As with the first transition, the second one is linked to self concept.
- Taking responsibility or decisions comes as a result of being honest with herself.

Rest's Neo-Kohlbergian Approach

- Rest's work mainly builds off of Kohlberg's, similar to Gilligan, but takes a different position.

- Rest viewed moral development as more fluid and more broadly than Kohlberg did (Evans, 2010).

- Where Kohlberg and Gilligan have set stages to move through and build on each other, Rest felt that the stages of moral development were more fluid, that one may use more than one stage at a time and may even show forward movement in more than one stage at a time.

- Like Kohlberg, it is assumed that Rest mainly studied white men, again limiting the range of applicability of these moral development theories.

Rest...

- Where Kohlberg had his three criterion, Rest had three schemas:
  - the personal interest schema,
    - The first develops during childhood, where individuals consider what each stakeholder has to gain or lose in a moral dilemma.
  - the maintaining norms schema, and
    - The second criteria is a first attempt to see societal collaborations, such as wanting generally accepted social norms
    - This schema assumes that respect for authority comes from a respect for society.

– The post-conventional schema.

- asserts a moral obligation on communal values and is more advanced in terms of ethics.

- individuals appeal to an ideal, want shareable values and full reciprocity.

- Rest set out to examine how expectations about actions/rules are known and shared and how interests are balanced in a society.

Rest...

- Overall, Rest contributed to our understanding of moral development by asserting that individuals do not necessarily develop in neat and tidy stages, but rather can make progress in multiple areas at the same time.

- Rest also looked more closely at how society affects and is involved in an individual's moral development, whereas Kohlberg and Gilligan focused more on the individual.

- Lastly, Rest is known for being one of the first to create an objective measure of moral development, called the Defining Issues Test (DIT).

Thank you