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Procedures

Sample

1. 75 American boys were used – at the beginning of the research they were between the ages of 10 and 16.
2. By the end of the period of research, the boys were between 22 and 28.
3. Additional samples from a number of other countries (Great Britain, Canada, Taiwan, Mexico and Turkey) were also interviewed to gain a cross-cultural comparison.

Methodology

4. A longitudinal study was used which followed the development of the same 75 American boys for 12 years.
5. Kohlberg used interviews to assess the moral reasoning of the boys.
6. These interviews produced qualitative data.
7. Kohlberg created nine hypothetical moral dilemmas (such as the Heinz dilemma), with each dilemma presenting a conflict between two moral issues.
8. Each participant was asked to discuss three of these dilemmas, prompted by a set of ten or more open-ended questions such as:
 - Should Heinz steal the drug? (Why or why not?)
 - Does Heinz have a duty or obligation to steal the drug? (Why or why not?)
 - Is it important for people to do everything they can to save another's life? (Why or why not?)
9. Following an analysis of the boys' answers, common themes were identified which led to a stage theory being constructed.
10. Each boy was re-interviewed every three years.

F - The boys' answers were analysed and common themes were identified so that the stage theory could be constructed.

Kohlberg's stages of moral development

THE PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL	+ Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation. + Stage 2: The instrumental purpose orientation.
THE CONVENTIONAL LEVEL	+ Stage 3: Interpersonal cooperation. + Stage 4: The social order maintaining orientation.
THE POST CONVENTIONAL LEVEL	+ Stage 5: The social contract orientation. + Stage 6: The universal ethical principles orientation

Please click on the link at the bottom of the page for more detail about each stage.

F - Kohlberg found that the younger children thought at the pre-conventional level and as they got older their reasons for moral decision became less focused on themselves and more focused on doing well because relations with others are viewed as important.

F - The results in Mexico and Taiwan were the same except that development was a little slower.

Conclusions

C - Kohlberg concluded that the key features of moral development are:

- Stages are invariant and universal, meaning that people world-wide go through the same stages in the same order.
- Each new stage represents a more equilibrated form of moral understanding which results in a more logically consistent and morally mature form of understanding.

C - Moral discussion classes can help children develop their moral thinking, and discussions with children at stages 3 and 4 result in the child moving forwards.

Link to Kohlberg's original research - <https://bit.ly/2Qew1bC>