



Kohlberg's moral development stages: an abstract analysis

Dr Rita, PGT Biology, Education Department, Haryana

Abstract

The phases of moral growth of Lawrence Kohlberg represent an evolution of the psychological paradigm initially devised by Jean Piaget, Swiss psychologist. Kohlberg started researching on this subject as an undergraduate student in psychology at Chicago University in 1958 and spread theory through his life. The theory suggests that moral reason, the basis for ethical behaviour, has six phases of progress which are each more suitable than their predecessor to respond to moral dilemmas. Kohlberg pursued the emergence of moral judgement well past the ages studied by Piaget, who also argued that logic and morality were developing in building phases. Expanding on Piaget's thesis, Kohlberg determined that the moral development process was mainly concerned with justice and continued throughout the person's life, which led to a debate of the metaphysical ramifications of such study.

Key words: person, growth, Kohlberg, etc.

Presentation

These six stages of moral growth take place in pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional moral periods. For his studies Kohlberg was interested in stories such as the Heinz paradox and how people defend their acts if they are put in the same moral dilemmas. He examined rather than concluded the mode of moral reasoning exhibited and graded it in one of six levels. The hypothesis has been criticised from many points of view. It claims that fairness is stressed by removing other universal principles such as caring; that there is a superposition between the phases that is easier to view them as spheres, or that analyses of the causes for moral judgments are often post hoc rationalisation of intuitive decisions (both decision-maker and psychologist). A new area was established in psychology by Kohlberg's hypothesis and Kohlberg was the 16th in introductory psychology textbooks of the whole century, according to Haggbloom et al research 's by the most eminent psychologists of the 20th century. Kohlberg's measure is about how people justify conduct and his stadiums are not a way to evaluate how the actions of others is moral; there can be a distinction between how someone scores on the level and how they act. The general theory is that moral behaviour of people at higher levels is more responsible, stable and predictable.

Kohlberg's spiritual growth stages

Level 1 – Pre-conventional ethics

We may not have a personal code of morals at the preconventional stage (most nine years old and younger, others over nine years). Our moral code is instead influenced by adult norms and the implications of their laws being observed or broken. Authority is beyond the individual and logic is focused on the physical effects.

Stage 1. Obedience and penalty Guidance

The child/person is nice to escape punishment. You may have done something if an individual is disciplined.

Stage 2: Exchange and Individualism



At this point, children understand that the authorities don't just offer a right opinion. Different people have different points of view.

Level 2 - Conventional moral character

We tend to internalise the normative values of highly regarded adult role models at the traditional stage (most teens and adults). Authority is internalised but not challenged, and thinking is founded on the standards of the society to which the person belongs.

Stage 3: Good interpersonal connections

The child/individual is nice to be seen by all as a good human. The responses then relate to the acceptance of others.

Stage 4. Preservation of the social order

In order to follow the law and escape blame, the child/individual becomes conscious of the broader laws of society.

Level 3 - Post-conventional ethics

Individual judgement is founded on concepts of self-selection, and moral judgement is based on individual freedom and justice. This moral logic is, according to Kohlberg, as far as most people are concerned. Just 10-15% are capable of the abstract thinking required for stage 5 or 6 (post-conventional morality). That is, most people derive their spiritual views from the people around them and only a minority thinks for itself of ethical standards.

Stage 5. Social and Individual Rights Contract

The child/individual knows that while rules/laws operate for the sake of the greater number, they act often against the interests of individuals. The problems are not always simple. For eg, the security of life is more relevant in Heinz's dilemma than violating the rule against robbery.

Stage 6. Universal Guidelines.

People also formed their own set of moral rules that could or could not comply with the law at this time. The values extend to all. Human freedom, equity and equality, for example.

The individual is willing to act to uphold these values even though it is against the rest of society and has to pay the repercussions of disapproval and incarceration. Kohlberg doubted that this stage was achieved by few individuals.

Theoretical suppositions (philosophy)

The moral development of Kohlberg is based on the premise that people are communicative naturally, able to reason and to understand others and the world around them. The phases of this model apply to the qualitative moral reasonings of individuals, but they do not explicitly represent credit or criticism for the behaviour or character of any person. Arguing that his principle tests abstract logic and not real moral implications, Kohlberg argues that the shape and form of moral arguments are separate from the contents of such arguments.

The philosophy of Kohlberg relies on the idea that fairness is the central aspect of moral thought. Justice itself depends heavily on the concept of rational logic. While a judicially modified moral philosophy, Kohlberg viewed this as being consistent with plausible deontology and eudemonia formulations.

The theory of Kohlberg understands values as a vital right aspect. Whatever the right is, there should be no relativism, for Kohlberg, it must be uniformly applicable across cultures. In



addition, virtues are not real world characteristics; they are prescriptive. However, moral judgements should be logically tested in terms of fact and falsehood.

According to Kohlberg, someone who advances to a higher level of moral judgement cannot miss stages. For example, a person cannot leave mainly peer opinions to be a supporter of social contracts. However, a person can look for the next step if he faces a moral dilemma and finds his current level of moral thinking unsatisfactory. The guiding force behind spiritual growth is the recognition of the shortcomings of the present level of thought, since each progressive stage is more appropriate than the previous. This method is thus regarded as positive, as it is undertaken by the deliberate construction of the person and in no meaningful way as part of the inherent dispositions of the individual or as a consequence of previous inductions.

Formal modules

Progress in the phases of Kohlberg is due to a growing maturity of the person, both mentally and in juggling contradictory social value demands. The method of settling competing arguments is called "justice service." Kohlberg distinguishes two such judicial operations: equity that requires an objective consideration of individuals, and reciprocity that implies consideration of the position of individual merit. The best outcome for Kohlberg is "reversibility," where a moral or due act is tested in a given situation, whether or not the act is satisfactory even though a single entity has a role to play in that situation.

Knowledge and learning lead to moral development. The individual's "vision of people" and its "social perspective level" are particularly significant, each of which becomes more dynamic and mature with each advancing point. The "vision of people" can be understood as a person's grasp of the psychology of others; it can be seen as a continuum, where stage one is fully socio-centered and no other person is seen at all and stage six. Likewise, the level of the social viewpoint includes the interpretation of the social world, which varies from the perception of individuals, as social expectations are valued.

Conclusion

Kohlberg's philosophy was attacked for stressing fairness to the detriment of all principles such that the concerns of others who value other normative facets of behaviour cannot be properly addressed. Critics further contend that the phases of Kohlberg are culturally skewed, in particular that the highest phases represent a Westernized ideal of justice founded on individual thinking. This is partial to people that exist in non-Western cultures who emphasise less individualism. Another critique of Kohlberg's philosophy is that people often show considerable incoherence in their philosophical opinions. This is also the case where drinking and driving or in business circumstances are involved where participants have shown justification in a lower stage of growth, usually using self-interest motivation (i.e., stage 2) than logic motivated by authority and social order (i.e., stage four). Critics contend that such contradictions cannot be attributed to Kohlberg's hypothesis.

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