

Evaluate two  
theories. piaget and  
kolhberg assignment



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This assignment will describe and evaluate two theories in developmental psychology. Firstly looking at Piaget's Theory then followed by Kohlberg, then an evaluation of the similarities and differences of the two. It will provide evidence of how Piaget's and Kohlberg's theory both suffer from the same criticisms as they both use dilemmas with a particular criteria of a child and culture. The theory only considers a child's beliefs not its actual behaviour. Jean Piaget was born in Switzerland. Piaget used children to assess moral development.

He did this by giving the children specific games to play the most popular one being marbles. As he studied he observed the way the children applied the rules and their reasoning to change the rules. In addition to this he also clinically interviewed children and asked hypothetical questions about lying and cheating. This gave him an insight about how children make decisions and what their beliefs consist of. He also learned how they determined knowing right from wrong. To Piaget children are born with very basic mental structure.

An example of a story Piaget would give to a child would be there are two children one child has been told not to go into the cupboard to get a biscuit, the child does this and knocks over one cup in the process. The other child accidentally knocks five plates off the dinner table, as they have walked through the door. Piaget concluded to the three stages shown below based on the children's answers from asking questions similar to the above. Piaget hypothesized three stages; Pre Moral; Heteronomous; Autonomous reality. He believed that the pre moral stage children have no concern or awareness of rules; this is age zero-five years.

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Piaget then moved on to Heteronomous stage, here he concentrated on children ages five-nine years. He believed that these children had adherence to rules and duties and obedience to authority. The third stage being Autonomous, Piaget concentrated on children who were ten plus years. He found that children were aware of rules and agreements and these can be considered critically, also rules can be selectively applied depending on intention or mutual agreement. The quote below backs up Piaget's theory. " In accordance with Piaget's view a strong relationship was found in Weston cultures between age and children's level of moral reasoning.

Younger children more often display aspects of heteronomous morality and are inclined to judge the consequences of a deed as more important than the motives of the transgressor when passing moral judgement. (Hoffman, 1970; Lickona, 1976; Surber 1982) Piaget's theory has also been criticized " According to Authors such as Berk (1994a) and Shaffer (1993) Piaget underestimates the Moral understanding of younger children. They contend that there are indications that children can make moral decisions at an earlier stage than Piaget's research. Piaget's critics believe that moral development will continue through to adulthood and even then it can still be varied. Lawrence Kohlberg was a Jewish American psychologist. He specialised in moral and expand on Piaget's work to form a theory that explained the development of moral reasoning. Kohlberg based his theories upon research and interviews with groups of young boys. He gave them a set of moral dilemmas and then interviewed them to determine the reasoning behind their answers. From doing this research Kohlberg created a model that consisted of 3 levels and 6 stages.

Level one is Pre- Conventional. Stage one is Obedience and punishment; at this stage of moral development, children under 9 years old see rules as unquestionable and permanent. Conforming to the rules is important because it means to avoid punishment. Stage two is Instrumental-Relativist and it focuses on individual's point of view and how they Judge circumstances for their personal needs. Level two is the Conventional level; stage 3 is Interpersonal Relationships living up to people's expectations and being a considerate human being, this will be most adolescents and adults. Stage 4 is Maintaining Social Order all laws should be obeyed and authority must be respected. Level 3 is Post- Conventional. Stage five is Social contracts and individual rights. At this stage people have different values; opinions and beliefs of their people around them. Rules are important in a society but people of the society should agree on these rules. Stage six Universal ethical principles; at this stage Laws should be obeyed, but changed if not ethical and even if they conflict with laws and rules. (Baron 1996) (Active Psychology) Stage six is only ever reached by 10% of adults as operation hinking is needed.

The individual must be capable of abstract thought. " We are not convinced that many people ever progress beyond stage 4 " (Shaver and Strong1976) The best known criticism of Kohlbergs came from Carol Gilligan 1982 who claimed that women scored lower on Kohlbergs tests because those tests were male biased. (EPSA Philosophy of science Amsterdam 2009 Google book) In addition to being questioned about the influence of gender, others have suggested that Kohlbergs theory of moral development is culturally-biased.

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Specifically, researchers have posited that the highest stages of his theory reflect a westernized ideal of justice based on individualistic thought and that it is biased against those that live in non-Western societies that do not value individualism as much (Shaffer, Wood, & Willoughby, 2002). There are many similarities between Piaget and Kohlberg's theories; children go through different stages of moral development. It is believed that clinical interviews were the best method for studying children's moral development. Piaget and Kohlberg both gathered data by asking questions based on hypothetical questions.

The differences; Piaget believed that moral development had completed by end of middle childhood. Kohlberg believed children continued to develop past autonomous reality. There is evidence that Kohlberg's and Piaget's theories are both gender and culture bias. They both use dilemmas with particular criteria of a child and culture. Piaget influenced Kohlberg to research Moral Development and found stages beyond Piaget's model. This was also affirmed by Shaffer. Both theories are both gender and culture bias. They both use dilemmas with particular criteria of a child and culture.

Piaget influenced Kohlberg to research Moral Development and found stages beyond Piaget's model. This was also affirmed by Shaffer. Bibliography A1, D. R. (Eighth Edition). *Developmental Psychology*. Linda Schreiber. Taylor, I. (1999). *Active Psychology*. Pearson Education Limited. *Cognition and Development*. (n. d.). Retrieved from Psychology4a: <http://psychology4a.com/develop10.htm> Louw, D. (n. d.). *Human Development*. Retrieved from Google Books : <http://books.google.co.uk/> [http://www.sevencounties.org/poc/view\\_doc.php?type=doc&id=41174&cn=1310](http://www.sevencounties.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=41174&cn=1310)

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