

# Kohlberg's theory of moral dilemma research paper examples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



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## **Psychology**

### The Case of Deprived Education

Based on the given situation of the subject, it appears that the student has to come up with a justification strong enough to refute her parent's decision that will deprive her of her education. The adolescent female had to tell a lie or a "white lie" in order to have a reasonable ground to continue attending high school. It falls under Kohlberg's ideas of moral reasoning defined as judging for what is right and wrong. It is based on human situations wherein individuals had to make difficult decisions for their own good. It has everything to do with moral justification wherein the female had to believe that her action is morally adequate and would justify a just cause. I can be concluded from the female's action that there is an act of deception, which would constitute a statement that "I had to lie because I need to finish high school to fulfill my dream of going to college".

Under Kohlberg's theory, the dilemma is classified as Level 3 (Post conventional) under Stage 6 or the Universal Ethical Principle Orientation.

The female's choice cannot be judged either right or wrong because the choice of deception based on the situation is in the matter of individual

conscience. It involves concepts of human dignity, inequality and justice. The female's belief stands on universal point of view, which the society should agree (Barger, 2000). On a personal perspective, the female is right to use deception because her cause is based on a concept that the majority of the society would totally agree. Education is detrimental to all human beings; it is part of everyone's universal rights. This reasoning is based on the principles of Level 3 - Stage 5 of Kohlberg's or the Social Contract Orientation. Judging that the female's act of deception is good is determined by the standard of individual rights that the society would agree upon. The adolescent female's enthusiasm for education is her individual right, which is stipulated in the laws of the nation and in the international laws on universal human rights. Other people may argue that lying is not ethical, but it can be justified by a higher sense of morality.

## **Analysis Based on Kohlberg's Six Stage of Moral Development**

The adolescent female's dilemma is synonymous to Piaget's principles of two forms of morality. The first one came from the female's experience with her parents. The morality surrounding is derived from the notion of unilateral authority in a sense that the adult sets rules and enforce them to her. The rules such as not going to school and tend to younger siblings instead will result to the development of stages 5 and 6 respectively. The young female understands that breaking the rules would entail applicable punishment, which is synonymous to telling lies about the school. As the female begins to have realization derived from interacting with her peers, she attains the second for morality in the process. New factors would inhibit her common

perception of what is right and wrong, the female would begin to question her parent's ulterior motives and consider the future possibilities that would have a significant implication on her. In the described dilemma, the concept of deception lies on top of two common grounds. First, lying is punishable based on the standards of moral values set by her society, in contrary deception is necessary in order to overcome the hindrances in reaching her ultimate goals and avoid being deprived of her universal rights to be educated. The contradiction between the parents and the female's perception of right and wrong differs because of influencing factors such as peers and self-realization. The female could have asserted her arguments to her parents instead of lying, but to save her future, she would have to rely on deception.

## References

Berger, R. N. (n. d.). Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development. California State University, Dominguez Hills. Retrieved December 12, 2012, from <http://www.csudh.edu/dearhabermas/kohlberg01bk.htm>