

Article analysis

Psychology



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Paternalistic Helping in Three-Year-Old Children Helping others is one of the important social aspects in the lives of human beings. According to Martin and Olson, children start helping others in the second year of their lives (1). Paternalistic helping is the kind of helping where the helper believes to know best on what suits the beneficiary's goals. The Study was meant to investigate whether by the age of three, children already have paternalistic helping character. To investigate this research question, four pairs of matched dysfunctional and functional objects were presented to the children then the experimenter asked for assistance from these children to achieve specific goals. Different objectives were presented by sub studies 1, 2, and 3. Results of study 1 indicated that children at the age of three engage in paternalistic helping. Study 2 presented the same situation to the children though the experimenter's goal in case two was to investigate whether the children could identify the dysfunctional objects to be thrown away. The results for study 2 proved that at age three, children were willing to offer dysfunctional object to be thrown. To investigate whether children are judicious paternalistic helpers, study 3 employed the same procedure and it was found out that children help judiciously.

In general, psychology of a child's development, by the age or three to four, a child should have achieved most cognitive development milestones. At this age, children are expected to understand the concept of similar and different objects and know what common household objects are used for. In addition, better understanding and reasoning starts at this stage. The study on paternalistic helping in children revealed the ability of children at this age to reason and makes the appropriate choice towards helping a beneficiary. At this age, most children are usually active and show willingness in helping

others.

According to my opinion, these researchers did a great job by explaining in details how children at the age of three are capable of identifying the right thing that can help the beneficiaries achieve their goals. It is also quite remarkable the study found out that by this age, children are capable of giving advice depending on the assistance needed. The results of the study are quite applicable in real life situations in order to understand the children's psychological development. The results in this study can be applied to assess the cognitive development in children.

The major strength of this research was the procedure through which the experiment was performed. Familiarizing the children could help make the comfortable to participate freely and help the experimenter achieve unbiased results. Another strength of the study is the statistical method of analyzing the data, which produced dependable results. However, a critic may be interested in the fact that the study did not take into account some factors such as cases where children have psychological disorders. Could there be any chance that all children by the age of three are paternalistic helpers? The family environment of these children should have been taken into consideration as this also influences the willingness of a child to help. A critic may also argue that the sample sizes were quite small to make inference on the entire children population.

Works Cited

Martin, Alia and Olson, Kristina. When Children Know Better: Paternalistic Helping In 3-Year Old Children. Yale University. 2013. Print.