A study of selected factors related to moral development in children ages seven to ten

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A STUDY OF SELECTED FACTORS RELATED TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN AGES SEVEN TO TEN

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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A STUDY OF SELECTED FACTORS RELATED TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT
IN CHILDREN AGES SEVEN TO TEN

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of The School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of The Requirements For The Degree Of
Doctor Of Education

By

Gail Brooke Newton

May 1983
APPROVAL SHEET

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of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following individuals:

My grandfather, A. L. Parsons, age 91, for his encouragement
My mother, Edith English, for her confidence
My husband, Charles E. Newton, for his help
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My daughters, Denise Parnell and Dara Lindsay for their concern
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Educational systems in the United States of America were established for the purpose of moral development. In order for students to learn to read the Bible and other religious works, schools were maintained by the local citizenry. Elementary schools taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. The Virginia statute of 1631 required that youth be instructed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. (Good, 1960) The *New England Primer* published in 1690 became the most famous textbook of the times. Its stories all had strong religious morals. It was later followed by the "McGuffian" readers that also dealt with stories involving morality. Character building was a major goal of early education. (Florisha)

In 1909, Dewey's *Moral Principals in Education* declared that a mandate was issued to all those concerned with the education of children. An education in morality must be provided all students. Dewey saw the teaching of morality integrated throughout the instructional day but not as a hidden subject. He felt that moral education should be the primary goal of instruction and that students should be guided to make moral decisions consistently. (Dewey, 1909)

Not much progress was made in the area of the study of moral development following Dewey's work until Jean Piaget's research twenty years later. Piaget's work dealt mostly with the cognitive
deals with his theory of moral development. Much of his work was
based on a study in Geneva where he used a limited regional survey.
In his work Piaget concluded that moral development involved two
stages. Piaget's two stages dealt with the morality of constraint
and the morality of cooperation. The two moralities are different.
The first morality is influenced by society shaping views and
behavior. This is the socialization process for young children.
Morality is conformity to the demands of society. The second
morality is determined by the individual who reflects on the nature
of the world and makes judgments about actions. The moralities
are characterized on two levels, the concrete and the more abstract.
The key turning point in development towards maturity in moral judg-
ment takes place at about twelve years of age. (Piaget, 1932)

Not until Kohlberg's work in the 1950's, however, was moral
development studied in depth. Kohlberg's work listed six stages
of moral development and extended Piaget's two stages. Growth in
moral development like cognitive development was believed to pro-
gress through a series of stages. (Kohlberg, 1981)

Kohlberg's work, like Piaget's, emphasized basic cognitive
structures that underlie moral reasoning. He listed six stages.
They are: Stage One - *The Stage of Punishment and Obedience*;
Stage Two - *The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and*
Exchange; Stage Three - The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity; Stage Four - The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance, Transitional Level; Stage Five - The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility; and Stage Six - The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles.

Both Piaget and Kohlberg used justice as the central concept in their theories and both viewed moral development as creating social balance among individuals. Longitudinal age trend data were used by both Piaget and Kohlberg, but Kohlberg's studies were more extensive and over a longer period of time. (Rest, 1981) More than eighty studies conducted over the past thirty years have dealt with the various aspects of Kohlberg's work. However, rarely does one of the studies look at individuals below ten years of age. From this one can infer that young children are incapable of higher levels of moral development.

New findings in the area of child development seem to indicate that cognitive growth is uneven and cell multiplication is greater at certain times. (Restak, 1979) Bloom stated that "in terms of intelligence, eighty percent is gained by age eight." (Bloom, 1964) These findings appear to conflict with moral development theory. The present study seeks to examine the moral development of younger children in order to provide additional information.

At the present time the literature in the field of moral development appears to conflict with new findings in other areas.
of child development. Generally, the evidence seems to indicate that children can operate at higher cognitive levels at an earlier age than previously thought possible.

The human brain approaches its adult size, weight, and number of cells by the time a child is two years of age. (Restak, 1979) The greatest periods of cell multiplication occur prior to the child's fifth year. Bloom divided the acquiring of intelligence into the following divisions. Bloom stated that "in terms of intelligence measured at age seventeen, at least twenty percent is developed by age one, fifty percent by age four, eighty percent by age eight, and ninety-two percent by age thirteen." (McCarthy)

According to the research of Chukorsky, a child's vocabulary grows to 250-300 words in his first two years and into the thousands in his third year. The child uses language to structure his world, to communicate and to gain knowledge. (Schattner, 1971)

Piazza reported that in a 1958 study by Kirk seventy percent of the handicapped children who were retarded and received preschool education had IQ increments of between ten and thirty points. It was felt that greater gains could be expected if enrichment was begun earlier. Studies that began enrichment programs after six years old showed much less gain than studies of younger children. (Piazza, 1979)

Dawe's research involved language teaching. She began with youngsters ages three through six years old. Speech and language
training was provided for ninety-two hours to the experimental group. The training involved help in understanding words and concepts, looking at and discussing pictures, and listening to poems and stories. The children in the experimental and control groups had borderline retarded IQ's. Field trips were also a part of the experience for the experimental groups. The experimental group gained an average of fourteen points during the study. (Dawe, 1968)

The present study also seeks to examine intelligence quotient, economic status, and achievement and their correlation to the moral development of younger children.

At what age can children deal intellectually with the abstract and conceptual questions involved in moral problems? This is a concern not only for the theoretician and researcher but for the classroom teacher who needs to make decisions about whether students have the intellectual, social, and emotional readiness to deal with moral issues. "In practice, there is a tendency among moral educators to emphasize personal and social development for younger children and defer intellectual discussions of moral issues until children are more able to deal with them at a conceptual level." (Purpel and Ryan, 1976)

It is important to look at the factors which affect moral development. Turiel, (1969) found that with younger children too high or too low a level of moral teaching resulted in lack of
progress. In another study, curriculum was effective when applied at the appropriate level of the child. (Blatt and Kohlberg, 1969) The teacher's role as a model may be most effective if the teacher exhibits moral reasoning one stage above that of the child. (Rest, 1973; Turiel and Kohlberg, 1969) Kohlberg, (1975) described a need for open and Socratic discussion of moral problems in a classroom situation. These findings point to a need for developing curriculum to promote moral development. The findings of this study should provide further information to use in developing curriculum, instructional strategies, and grouping procedures for moral instruction. It should also provide more information on younger children which could lead to further investigation of the potential of young children to progress in moral development. This, in turn, could cause researchers and teachers to revise and develop curriculum in moral education for younger children.

Statement of the Problem

This study will focus on two questions:

1. Do children who are seven to ten years old exceed theoretical expectations in their moral development?

2. Do achievement, intelligence, and socio-economic status affect the moral development of seven to ten year olds?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One - Seven year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.
Hypothesis Two - Eight year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Three - Nine year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Four - Ten year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Five - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between intelligence and the stage of moral development.

Hypothesis Six - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between socio-economic status and moral development.

Hypothesis Seven - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between achievement as measured by standardized tests and the level of moral development.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis One - Seven year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Two - Eight year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Three - Nine year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Four - Ten year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.
Null Hypothesis Five - No relationship exists between intelligence and the stage of moral development in younger children (ages seven to ten).

Null Hypothesis Six - No relationship exists between socio-economic status and the stage of moral development in younger children (ages seven to ten).

Null Hypothesis Seven - No relationship exists between achievement and the level of moral development in younger children (ages seven to ten).

**Definition of Terms**

The most frequently used terms in this study are listed here with definitions as they apply directly to the study.

**Younger children** - children ages seven to ten.

**Moral Development** - emergence of an individual through six stages which represent a philosophical point of view on ethical issues. A full understanding of justice as equality is the ultimate goal. (Kohlberg, 1958)

**Moral Education** - character development through training, promoting "sensitivity to the needs of others, adequacy in moral judgment, strengthening commitment to moral goals, and developing self-regulation." (Rest, 1979)

**Cognitive Developmental Theory** - Piaget's theory that intellectual ability undergoes qualitative developmental changes linked to the maturation process. Four stages through which the child
must advance are noted.

**Socioeconomic Status** - a person's social and financial level as measured by various criteria (occupation, education, income).

For the purpose of this study, high socioeconomic status was classified as being accorded to families whose income exceeded $55,000 per year, and/or owned a business or fell into professional classifications such as "physician." Low socioeconomic status was delegated to individuals on free lunch or welfare programs. The middle socioeconomic category contained individuals between the two extremes. This criteria was established for the purpose of this study.

**Achievement** - knowledge gained through accomplishment of a skill as measured by the SRA Achievement Test - composite test scores.

**I.Q.** - a number describing a person's level of intelligence as measured by a test. It is derived by multiplying the mental age by one hundred and dividing the result by age in years.

**Limitations of the Study**

Any study has limitations which need to be identified in order that the work can be reviewed in the proper perspective. This researcher recognizes the following limitations of the present study.

A. The representativeness of the sample and its ability to generalize to other populations is an area of concern. The Goochland County School System is a small county system and the results of
this study may not apply to larger more cosmopolitan areas.

B. The validity of the test for younger children is questionable. Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview has been used with older children and adults and validated with an older population.

C. The reliability of the test administrator could affect the results of the study. Although the same individual was used for all test administration and prior training was available, the degree of expertise and the consistency of administration could limit the significance of the study.

D. The reliability of the test scoring is a limitation as the test scoring was done by the researcher. A ten percent sample sent to the Institute for Moral Development at Harvard University yielded a seventy-five percent agreement within one-half stage between the scores of the researcher and the institute. The researcher tended to score higher. The ages of the children were not known to the institute scorer.

E. The validity of the construct of moral development, what it really is and how it can be tested may be the greatest limitation. While Kohlberg's research has attempted to make the assessment of moral development as objective as possible, there remains an element of subjectivity which is present and should be recognized.

Organization of Study

Chapter One has included the background of the issue, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study, the hypothe-
ses, definitions, limitations, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two will contain a review of the related research and literature. Chapter Three includes the methodology of the study, including instrumentation and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings of the research. The concluding chapter, Chapter Five, will offer conclusions and recommendations.
Chapter Two includes noteworthy literature and research which pertains most directly to this study. While over eighty research studies were documented to contain work involving moral development, only a limited number had any direct relationship to this study. Those studies having a direct relationship are in this chapter.

Relevant Literature

Cognitive Moral Development—Dewey-Piaget-Kohlberg

In 1909 Dewey's *Moral Principles in Education* was published. This book, written for classroom teachers, became a classic on the subject of moral education. Dewey attacked the idea that morality could be taught as a separate subject and that it could be a hidden subject where moral instruction would just occur in the natural course of a school day (Dewey, 1909).

Dewey maintained that "moral education should be centered in reflective thought, not in character training or heart warming" (Dewey, 1909). This component of Dewey's work provided for study in the field of moral development.

In *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Piaget countered Durkheim's belief that society and socialization alone determine the individual's morality. Piaget stressed cognitive development and proposed two moralities, the early morality based on norms of society and the latter developed through cognitive thought and peer
interaction. Piaget's two stages dealt with the morality of con-
straint and the morality of cooperation. The two moralities are
different. The first morality is influenced by society shaping views
and behavior. This is the socialization process for young children.
Morality is conformity to the demands of society. The second
morality is determined by the individual who reflects on the nature
of the world and makes judgments about actions. The moralities are
characterized on two levels, the concrete and the more abstract.
In earlier works, Piaget defined stages of cognitive development.
He listed the Sensorimotor Stage from birth to eighteen months, the
Pre-operational Stage from eighteen months to age four and a second
Pre-operational Stage from four to seven, the Stage of Concrete
Operations from seven to eleven years of age, and the Stage of
Formal Operations from eleven years of age to fifteen years. Along
with each stage of development, Piaget listed characteristics and
expectations. It appears to be a modified stage concept that he
employed in his study of moral development. (Piaget) While Piaget
used two stages, Kohlberg later used six (Rest, 1981).

In order to test his theory Piaget interviewed children using
moral stories. He concluded that younger children showed "childish"
judgments based mostly on social norms. He found that the children
believed that adult social rules were unchangeable. Piaget re-
ported that up to the age of ten, judgments were based on material
consequences, thus concluding that younger children have a literal
view of moral rules. Piaget's results indicated that younger
children were at lower stages of thinking (Piaget). Piaget felt that abstract problem solving was too difficult for students below eleven years of age. Although Piaget's work has greatly influenced the study of moral development, his studies have been criticized recently for lacking inter-judge reliability and retest stability. Also they have been criticized for lacking support from longitudinal studies (Rest, 1981).

Kohlberg had studied the work of Piaget and was especially interested in Piaget's theory of developmental stages as it applied to moral thinking (Galbraith, Jones, 1973). Kohlberg's study, A Longitudinal Study of Moral Judgment was conducted over a twenty year period and was published in 1980. The study attempted to document Kohlberg's cognitive developmental account of moral judgment. It focused on the qualitative form of moral reasoning and on developmental changes in reasoning in order to define trends. It assumed that a consistent logic can be abstracted from individuals' responses to various dilemmas (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman, 1980).

Kohlberg's theory does not focus on behavior or decisions but on the reasons for the individual's behavior and/or decisions. The reasons indicate the state of moral development. Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is evaluated by examining the subject's reasons for making a judgment.

According to Kohlberg, an individual must pass through stages. The stages are progressive and sequential. A stage cannot be
skipped in the progression. While stage development is invariant, a subject may remain in a stage indefinitely. Subjects learn best when presented with instruction at one level above their own and they are attracted to that level. Movement through the stages occurs when individuals are presented a problem they have difficulty resolving. Kohlberg's testing and his strategies for moral education deal with the presentation of situations which pose difficulties in providing a solution.

Kohlberg described six stages of moral development in his 1958 study. He refined the stages over the years but did not basically change them. They are:

**Level A - Preconventional Level**

Stage One - The Stage of Punishment and Obedience

Right is literal obedience to rules and authority avoid-punishment and not doing physical harm. The reason for doing right is avoidance of punishment. A person at this stage takes an egocentric point of view.

Stage Two - The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange

Right is acting to meet one's own interests and also what is fair to others. This stage takes a concrete individualistic perspective. Goodwill, fairness, and exchange of services are part of this stage.

**Level B - Conventional Level**

Stage Three - The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations,
Relationships, and Conformity

Right is playing a good role, concerned about other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners and being motivated to follow rules and expectations. What is right is living up to what is expected by people close to one or what people generally expect of people in one's role as son, sister, friend, and so on. The reasons for doing right are needing to be good in one's own eyes and those of others, caring for others and because if one puts oneself in the other person's place, one would want good behavior from the self.

Stage Four - The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance

Right is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of society or the group. What is right is fulfilling the actual duties to which one has agreed. Laws are to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties and rights. Right is also contributing to society, the group, or institution. The reasons for doing right are to keep the institution going as a whole, self-respect or conscience as meeting one's defined obligations, or the consequences if everybody did it. This stage differentiates the societal point of view from personal motives. A person at this stage takes the viewpoint of the system.
Level B/C - **Transitional Level**

This level is postconventional but not yet principled. This is Stage Four and one-half. This is a stage based on emotions. Conscience is seen as relative as are ideas such as "duty" and "morally right."

At this stage the perspective is that of an individual standing outside of his or her own society and considering himself as an individual making decisions without a generalized commitment or contract with society. One can pick and choose obligations, which are defined by particular societies but one has no principles for such choice.

Level C - **Postconventional and Principled Level**

Moral decisions are generated from rights, values, or principles that are or could be agreeable to all individuals composing or creating a society designed to have fair and beneficial practices.

Stage 5 - **The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility**

Right is upholding the basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group. What is right is being aware of the fact that people hold a variety of values and opinions, that most values and rules are relative to one's group. These "relative"
rules should usually be upheld, however, in the interest of impartiality and because they are the social contract. Some nonrelative values and rights such as life and liberty, however, must be upheld in any society and regardless of majority opinion. Reasons for doing right are in general feeling obligated to obey the law because one has made a social contract to make and abide by laws for the good of all and to protect their own rights and those of others.

Social Perspective
This stage takes a prior to society perspective—that of a rational individual aware of values and rights prior to social contracts.

Stage Six - The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles
This stage assumes guidance by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow.
Stage six is guided by universal ethical principles. The reason for doing right is that one has seen the validity of principles and has become committed to them. The perspective is that of any rational individual recognizing the nature of morality or the basic moral premise of respect for other persons as ends not means (Kohlberg, 1981).

Kohlberg studied boys aged ten to sixteen from 1956 through 1976. Kramer analyzed Kohlberg's finding and found that most subjects
followed a stage progression but many did not. These findings caused Kohlberg to refine his work by improving the descriptions and scoring methods "in order to bring theory, data, and measurement into closer agreement" (Colby, 1978). Kohlberg's subjects were selected by age, socioeconomic status, and sociometric status, and included fifty-three boys aged ten, thirteen, and sixteen. Socioeconomic status was based on parents' occupation and education as reported in school records. Sociometric status was determined by a test. Boys were asked to write the names of three other boys with whom they would like to have a discussion. Intelligence scores were taken from school records. Subjects were interviewed six times from 1955 until 1976.

Kohlberg found that age accounts for sixty percent of the variance in moral maturity scores. Adding socioeconomic status raised the proportion of variance to sixty-seven percent. Correlations between moral maturity scores and intelligence ranged from .17 to .27 in childhood and adolescence and .37 to .59 at age nineteen and above. With one exception (age thirty-six) correlations increased steadily from twenty-three on. This study's findings appeared to show that intelligence in childhood and adolescence is moderately related to moral development (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman, 1980).

Kohlberg's research is similar to Piaget's, but also differs in many respects. Kohlberg defines and broadens the concept of stages, while Piaget had only two stages. Piaget was trying to
establish that children's moral development is less developed than adults. Kohlberg tries to define moral development to a finer point. Piaget and Kohlberg both prefer clinical interviews.

Not only does Kohlberg describe more stages but he uses the stage concept itself in a different way than Piaget did in his morality work. Whereas Piaget was tentative and indefinite about his moral judgment stages, Kohlberg makes strong statements about the properties and implications of his stages (Rest, 1981).

Kohlberg undertook many studies within studies. It appears his primary interest was in reviewing, evaluating, and improving his assessment instrument. Studying the factors that relate to the stage of moral development was a minor part of his study. Working only with boys leads one to wonder if this made a difference in his original results. There also appears to be some tendency to overlook or account for inconsistencies in results such as the IQ correlation differences between children and adults and the thirty-six year old's results.

Correlations between moral maturity score and IQ ranged from .17 to .27 in childhood and adolescence for our sample but became substantially higher at age 19 and above (.37 - .59). Except at age 36 (an analysis which included only ten subjects), the correlations increase steadily from age 23 on. This occurs in spite of the fact that IQ was assessed only at Time 1. It appears, then, that while rate of moral development in childhood and adolescence is only slightly related to IQ, the final level achieved in adulthood is more closely related to intellectual capacity, perhaps partly via differential educational experiences that are related to intelligence (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman, 1980).

Kohlberg's contribution to the study of moral development has paved the way for others. Rest (1974) developed the Defining
Issues Test. This test also uses hypothetical dilemmas, but is an objective test where subjects rank items. The DIT looks more at how people judge than why they judge (Rest, 1981). Rest's test is for use with older populations in that subjects must be over twelve years of age. DIT research uses a large number of replicated and interlocking studies. Dozens of researchers have been involved in collecting data. One cross-sectional study involved forty-five hundred students in four groups. Age-education was said to account for thirty-eight percent of the variance (Rest, Davidson, Robbins). The DIT has been reported to yield test re-test reliability of .68 - .92 and internal consistency reliability of .77 and .79. There is, however, some concern as to how closely reading skills are measured in the results of this test since the ability to read is vital to answering the test successfully. Longitudinal studies testing the subjects at one to four year intervals have shown developmental sequence (Rest, 1981).

While the literature is replete with studies on moral development, the list starts narrowing as the researcher looks in the area of factors that affect moral development in young children.

Studies Related to Age

Kohlberg's study involving fifty boys from ten to twenty-five found that moral development moved step by step through a series of stages. His subjects included middle class boys from the United States, Taiwan, and Mexico. Kohlberg found stages occurring in the same order in subjects of all countries. He found most ten
year olds below stage two and most thirteen year olds at stage three. Similar results also occurred in Kohlberg's further study involving students from Mexico, Turkey, England, and Taiwan (Kohlberg and Kramer).

In his longitudinal study Kohlberg studied fifty-three boys, ten to sixteen from 1956 to 1976. The subjects were selected by age, socioeconomic status, and sociometric status. His findings revealed that age accounts for sixty percent of the variance in moral maturity scores. (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman, Marcus, 1983)

Krebs and Gillmore (1982) found that stage alignments by Kohlberg are inaccurate by a half stage or there are circumstances in which children may acquire the ability to apply principles of logic in moral reasoning before they acquire this ability in the physical area (Krebs, Gillmore, 1982). Krebs and Gillmore tested fifty-one children ages five through fourteen.

Sicoli studied second grade students. Several factors were correlated to moral maturity. Age was found to correlate significantly (Sicoli).

Younger children were also involved in a study by Salzstein and Osgood. They studied forty boys and girls in order to correlate intelligence with state of moral development. The children were in grades one, three, five, and eight (Salzstein and Osgood).

Another study included participants from four years until eighteen years of age. The children were all Iranian. Their moral judgment was found to be effected by socioeconomic status.
Children under nine years of age showed the greatest differences (Salili).

Four through eighteen year olds were participants in a 1973 study (Weiner and Peter). Age trends were observed with older children showing more advanced stages of moral development. This study lent support to the cognitive developmental view.

Krogh looked at the behavior of five year olds. Developmental influences were found to determine reasoning and behavior. It was concluded that direct teaching was most beneficial (Krogh).

Asprea and Betocchi found that younger children when asked to give rewards used achievement criteria. This use of criteria was used by most of the children tested (Asprea and Betocchi).

In 1973, Irwin and Ambron in two studies using children ages three to seven took thirty lower class and thirty middle class five year olds in the first study and thirty-four kindergarten children in the second study. They involved the subjects in role taking and moral judgments. Seven year olds scored higher than five year olds and age correlation was found between cognitive skills and moral judgments. (Irwin and Ambron)

The preceding studies relating to age in relationship to moral development have led to the present study which seeks to look at younger children ages seven to ten. The relationship of age of younger children seven to ten to Kohlberg's State of Moral Development as determined by Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is the subject of the present study.
Studies Relating to Intelligence Quotient

Kohlberg studied boys aged ten to sixteen in his longitudinal study (Kohlberg, 1978). One of the variables he correlated with stages of moral development was intelligence. Correlations between moral maturity scores and intelligence ranged from .17 to .27 in childhood and adolescence and .37 to .59 at age nineteen and above. These findings appeared to show a moderate relationship between intelligence and stage of moral development (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman, 1980).

A 1969 study by Nelsen was designed to compare and assess the roles of moral judgment and intelligence. This was tested in relation to patterns of behavior in temptation situations. Six tasks were administered to one hundred six sixth grade students. One hundred of the subjects were administered four Kohlberg Moral Judgement tasks a year later. Results indicated that moral judgment and resistance to temptation are correlated.

In another study (Salzstein and Osgood, 1975) forty boys and girls from grades one, three, five and eight were interviewed and scored by stages of moral development. Stage scores were not positively correlated with the variable intelligence.

In a 1978 study (Sicoli) children in five second grade classrooms were exposed to moral education through story-telling. Intelligence, age, sex, ordinal position, and peer popularity were analyzed. Level of intelligence did not show a significant relationship to level of moral development. The other factors did show varying relationships.
The present research seeks to look further at the variable intelligence as it relates to stages of moral development in young children, ages seven to ten.

**Studies Related to Socioeconomic Status**

Kohlberg's longitudinal study of fifty-three boys aged ten to sixteen examined the variable socioeconomic status as it relates to stages of moral development. He found that socioeconomic status correlated positively with the stage of moral development (Kohlberg).

In a study (Saltzstein and Osgood, 1975) forty children grades one, three, five and eight were interviewed. Stage scores were assigned. The study yielded findings in support of a correlation between socioeconomic status and stage of moral development.

Salili (1977) conducted a study to examine the roles of social, cultural, and cognitive developmental factors in determining children's moral and achievement judgments. The children ranged in age from four through eighteen and were Iranian boys and girls. Fourteen hundred eighty-five subjects were asked to evaluate behavior of subjects in a story. Results indicated that in moral judgment, socioeconomic status significantly modified age-related patterns for answering questions. The greatest differences occurred before age nine (Salili, 1977).

The present research seeks to look at the variable socioeconomic status and determine if there is a correlation between this variable and level of moral maturity of younger children. Salili's research indicates that a greater difference occurs in
younger children. The present research seeks to present further study in this area.

Studies Related to Achievement

Studies relating achievement to stage of moral development were extremely sparse in the literature. Achievement is mentioned in some studies, but it is not related to academic achievement rather to motivation. The individual's desire to achieve is the object of the study rather than the results of achievement as measured by academic tests.

A cross-sectional study of three hundred children ages four through eighteen (Weiner and Peter, 1973) identified significant age trends and lent support to a cognitive developmental view of achievement motivation. In another study, Krogh (1979), studied the moral development of thirty-five year olds. It was found that developmental influences alone determined reasoning and behavior, thus concluding that direct teaching could be more significant than environment in promoting changes. Younger children were found to use achievement criterion for distributing rewards (Asprea and Betocchi, 1977).

The present research seeks to look at academic achievement as it relates to the stage of moral development in young children. Since the research is sparse in this area, further research is needed.

Studies Related to Curriculum

In 1969 Turiel found in an experimental study that children could seldom comprehend moral messages more than one stage above their own, but that they learned well at one stage higher than their
own stage. Purpel and Ryan, Blatt and Kohlberg (1969) found that curriculum was effective when applied at the appropriate level of the child.

In his 1981 edition of the *Philosophy of Moral Development*, Volume I, Kohlberg states that,

Although we cannot yet be sure that the stimulation of development of moral judgment will result in moral conduct, research indicating considerable correspondence between level of judgment and conduct in children provides some optimism on this score. (Kohlberg, 1981)

Walker (1982), studied Kohlberg's claim that moral development proceeds through an invariant sequence of stages and a regression and stage skipping. Fifth- through seventh-grade children were tested to determine their cognitive, perspective-taking, and moral development.

Those children with the stages of cognitive and perspective-taking development held by Kohlberg to be prerequisite to further moral development were exposed in a brief role-playing situation, to one of the treatment conditions: One-stage below reasoning, one-stage above reasoning, two-stages above reasoning, neutral treatment, or no treatment. Moral reasoning posttests followed one and seven weeks later. Results supported the sequentiality claim as development was always to the next higher stage. However, contrary to the view that exposure to one-stage above reasoning represents the optimal means to induce development, it found that two-stages above reasoning was just as effective (Walker, 1982).

Sullivan and Beck (1971) used the concept of stages of moral development to develop a curriculum based on moral discussions and to evaluate its effectiveness through Kohlberg's Interview. Mosher and Sprinthall (1971) used Kohlberg's scale to evaluate a counseling program for adolescents. They found evidence that children and
adolescents in democratic classrooms show gains in moral reasoning. The gains approached a half stage increase in moral reasoning, double the gain achieved in moral education courses. They found that students understanding of democracy depends on their stage of moral development. A stage two student has a different outlook than a stage four student (Mosher and Sprinthall, 1978). In Mosher's work with high school students he states that most "high school students tend to be somewhere between stages two and three in Kohlberg's typology" (Mosher, 1978).

Mosher's work in developing curriculum for high school students with emphasis on democratic rule has impact for further development in that area. Self government is the prime aspect of his school. Implications for expanding curriculum in this area can be seen through Mosher's work with moral development of high school students.

Several researchers have developed curriculum for moral education based on research in moral development. Most of this has been for older children and adults. Little appears to have been developed for younger children ages seven to ten. The present study seeks to look at younger children and their stages of moral development in order to provide additional information in this area. This information could lead to further studies relating to curriculum, promoting moral development for younger children, ages seven to ten. 

Studies Related to the Instruments

The literature reports that moral judgment stage scores are stable across time for individuals, different raters agree on
scores, and alternative forms of the interview yield nearly the same score for the same individual. This assures reliable scoring within each study and provides for objective comparison of results across studies. By match between manual and interview judgments and providing indicators which specify what is necessary for a score to be assigned reliability is achieved (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Lieberman).

Kohlberg's longitudinal study provides support for validity of the instrument. When the Standard Form was used, scores agreed very closely with the theoretical predictions of invariant sequence and internal consistency. In order to fully validate the test, there is a need for further research. Nine studies done in Turkey (Nisan and Kohlberg) report evidence of sequence correlating to the Kohlberg Longitudinal Study.

Interviews from which sequence and internal consistency were derived were not used in reformulating the stages or the manual. The raters were required to use specific objective criteria. Responses were structurally consistent.

Raters reliability was tested using twenty Form A interviews scored by five raters. "Percent absolute figures for inter-rater reliability on Form A ranged from eighty-eight percent to one hundred percent agreement within a third of a stage, from seventy-five to eighty-eight percent for complete agreement based on the nine point scale and from fifty-three to sixty-three percent for complete agreement using the most finely differentiated thirteen
The correlation for raters one and two on the Form A test-retest interviews was ninety-eight percent" (Colby, Gibbs, Kohlberg, Lieberman, 1980). The raters varied in experience using the manual. Two of the five raters were Colby and Gibbs, the authors of the Standard Forms A and B, one was highly experienced, but not an author, the other two were inexperienced. Inter-rater reliability figures between the scores was high.

In another study, inter-rater reliability was established between Colby and research assistants from the University of California at Berkeley. All scores were within one-third of each other and eighty-three percent agreed with a nine point scale. (Colby, Gibbs, Kohlberg, Lieberman, 1980)

The Science Research Associates test used for intelligence quotient and achievement scores had two national standardizations, one in the spring and one in the fall of 1978. A sampling design was developed from each region in the United States. This test has been selected by The Virginia State Department of Education for use in the state testing program. The test is mandated for certain grade levels, fourth grade being the level for elementary school. Results from the test are published statewide and often used to compare the performance and ability of children in various areas across the state. The Goochland County School System has given the Science Research Association test at all grade levels except kindergarten. This county-wide testing program provided uniform test results for this study.

All of the preceeding research has laid groundwood for this study.
Then this study seeks to build on previous research and to open new areas for future research.

SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed literature and studies dealing with moral development. Emphasis was on major theories and literature related to the present study. The information available in the field of moral development is extensive and could not be completely recorded here. It is evident from the literature, however, that there is a gap in the area of moral development studies of younger children.
This study explored the possibility that younger children can reach higher levels of moral development. It also explored the relationship between intelligence, economic status and achievement in children ages seven to ten. In the first chapter the rationale for this study was presented. Chapter Two included the literature relevant to this study. Chapter Three is divided into (1) population and geographic area, (2) selection of the sample, (3) procedures for collection of data, (4) type of instrumentation, (5) data analysis, and (6) the method of analysis.

Population and Geographic Area

The target population consisted of all children between seven and ten years of age in the State of Virginia. The accessible population involved all children between seven and ten years in the Goochland County School System. The accessible population is comparable to the target population as the standardized test scores for grades four in Goochland County are similar to state scores. State scores were not reported with composite numbers. Table 1 indicates the relationship of state scores to the scores of Goochland County students. Goochland County scores fall within state ranges.

The sample population for this study was drawn from three elementary schools in the Goochland County, Virginia school division.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Language Arts</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goochland County</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These schools cover the geographic area from the east, the west, and the middle of the county. The eastern school borders on the large cosmopolitan city of Richmond. This school has a diversified population with several students whose parents are of professional status, others work in offices and stores, and some are unemployed. The school to the west has a larger rural population with a larger proportion of children whose parents are on welfare. The numbers of minority children are greater in this area. The school in the middle of the county draws from both segments as well as a trailer park, which is close to the school. The total county school population is less than two thousand and all elementary schools are relatively small in size having between two hundred-fifty and three hundred-twenty pupils. The three schools selected house grades kindergarten through six. Each of the three schools has a principal but not an assistant principal. Each school has approximately two teachers per grade level. In addition to classroom teachers, resource personnel are provided in music, physical education, art, reading, and many areas of special education, such as speech and occupational therapy.

Selection of the Sample

The sample was randomly selected from the accessible population using a five-thousand Random Digit table. (Glass, Stanley 1970) The only three schools in the Goochland County System housing all seven to ten year olds in their jurisdiction were used in
the study. A list was comprised for each age group in each school. Each school had four lists, one for seven year olds, one for eight year olds, one for nine year olds, and another for ten year olds. The Random Digit Table was used with each list to select ten students at each age level in each school. A total of one hundred twenty students from the Goochland County School System were involved in the study. Since the sample was random and all members of the accessible population had an equal chance of participating in the study, generalizing to the target population was facilitated.

A letter explaining the study and requesting parent permission was sent home following approval by the Goochland County School Board and The College of William and Mary Committee on Human Research. Of the one hundred twenty forms sent, eight parents refused permission and eighteen did not return forms. The Random Digit Table was used again to select additional participants to fill the one hundred twenty positions. All positions were filled. Due to lack of response at one school, however, six participants from another school were involved weighing the study more heavily with individuals from the west end of the county and less heavily with individuals from the middle of the county.

**Procedures for Collection of Data**

In an attempt to eliminate experimenter bias, the researcher trained an individual to administer Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. The test administrator was a certified teacher with
an extensive background of working with younger children. She administered Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview Form A and recorded all answers on paper. The tests were scored using the Standard Form Scoring Manual.

The Science Research Associates Educational Ability Series measures verbal number and reasoning abilities. It is a short test which gives an estimate of learning ability. The EAS quotient scale is a standard score with a mean of one hundred (S.R.A. Users Guide).

The composite achievement scores on the Science Research Associates test were used to determine achievement. These scores were reported in terms of percentiles one to ninety-nine. This reflects students performance in relation to others and combines achievement in reading, mathematics, using reference materials, social studies, and science.

Information available in students records was used to categorize economic status into one of three classifications—high, low, or average. For the purpose of this study high socioeconomic status was classified as being accorded to those families whose income exceeded $55,000 per year and/or owned a business or fell into professional classifications such as "physician." Low status was delegated to individuals on free lunch or welfare programs. The middle socioeconomic category contained individuals between the two extremes. All students were ranked with a one, two, or three
for the purpose of this study.

Ethical safeguards were provided by requiring permissions from several sources. The Goochland County School Board reviewed and approved the interview questions which were administered to the subjects prior to the administration. Copies of the interview questions were also sent to and approved by two committees of The College of William and Mary: The Committee for Research on Human Subjects for the College and The School of Education.

A letter, Appendix 1, explaining the study and requesting permission to review records and to administer Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview was sent to all parents of subjects. An explanation of how students were selected was also included along with a telephone number to call for further information. Only students whose parents signed permission were included in the study. Individuals are listed numerically and are not recognizable. All information is confidential. Results of the testing of individuals will not be released to anyone without the written permission of the family involved.

**Instrumentation**

The testing instrument used in this study is an interview test developed by Kohlberg of Harvard University. It consists of presenting three moral dilemmas to students. Each dilemma represents a conflict between two issues concerning morality. The subject makes a choice as to which issue is most important. Additional
questions follow each dilemma in order to determine the subject's reasoning. (Colby, 1981)

Scoring is done by awarding points to the moral stage that the answer addresses. In some cases two stages may get points. The stage with the largest portion of points is the major stage. The subjects moral maturity stage is calculated by multiplying each stage by the number of points at that stage and dividing the sum of the products by the total number of points assigned and then multiplying by one hundred. (Colby, 1981)

In order to determine the reliability of the scoring for this study, twelve randomly selected interviews were sent to The Center For Moral Development at Harvard University where they were scored.

Table 2 shows the scoring by the independent judge from The Center For Moral Development and the Researcher. The scores are listed for each student with the right hand column listing the scores of the independent judge and the researcher's scores on the left. Seventy-five percent of the scores agreed within one-half stage. The seventy-five percent agreement level is within the percentages of interjudge reliability found in other studies. (Colby, Gibbs, Kohlberg, Lieberman, 1980) The independent judge stated that his scores were on the conservative side. He was not informed prior to the scoring of the ages of the children nor the fact that the scores had been determined. The researcher tended to score higher on the interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Independent Judge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

In younger children (ages seven to ten) moral reasoning may reach stages higher than found in previous studies. The criterion was established that all children exceeding stage two were considered to be above level. The one hundred twenty scores on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview were analyzed and percentages were recorded for those participants exceeding stage two. A total percentage was determined for the group and individual percentages for each age classification. Hypotheses One, Two, Three and Four presented a problem in accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis as they do not contrast groups or test relationships. For this reason percentages will be discussed, but classical acceptance and/or rejection of Hypotheses One, Two, Three, and Four will not be possible.

Hypothesis Five, Hypothesis Six, and Hypothesis Seven contained the independent variables—Intelligence Quotient, Achievement and Economic Status.

Hypothesis Five - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between intelligence and the stage of moral development.

Hypothesis Six - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between economic status and moral development.

Hypothesis Seven - In younger children (ages seven to ten)
there is a positive relationship between achievement as measured by standardized tests and the level of moral development.

Each independent variable was correlated to the dependent variable stage of moral development.

Each age group seven to ten was analyzed separately on all variables as well as in a group. The findings are thus reported in both ways.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis One - Seven year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Two - Eight year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Three - Nine year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Four - Ten year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Null Hypothesis Five - No relationships exists between intelligence and the stage of moral development in younger children (ages seven to ten).

Null Hypothesis Six - No relationship exists between economic status and the stage of moral development in younger children (ages seven to ten).

Null Hypothesis Seven - No relationship exists between achievement and the level of moral development younger children (ages seven
Method of Analysis

The first four null hypotheses, higher stages of moral development cannot be reached by younger children, were not tested statistically. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables, intelligence quotient, economic status, achievement and the dependent variable moral maturity on hypotheses five, six and seven. The data were analysed by utilizing a program of the Computer Center of The College of William and Mary.

Summary

Chapter Three has presented a description of the population and geographic area of the study. It has also included the selection of the sample, procedures for collection of data, type of instrumentation, data analysis, and methods of analysis. Chapter Four will present the findings of the study.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The three previous chapters have presented background of the problem and (1) stated the hypotheses, (2) reviewed the literature, and (3) outlined the methodology, including the statistical analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings of this study.

Description of the Sample

A total of one hundred-twenty students participated in this study. Forty students from the elementary school in the eastern section of Goochland county, thirty-four from the elementary school in the middle of the county, and forty-six from the elementary school in the western end of the county. Appendices three, four, five, and six describe the subjects on the independent variables and their level of moral development. Intelligence Quotient scores were recorded in terms of the national percentile on the SRA test. They ranged from the fifth percentile to the ninety-ninth percentile. Twenty-two students were placed in the high socioeconomic classification according to the criteria of this study. Thirty-five were placed in the low socioeconomic group according to the criteria of this study, and sixty-three were in the middle socioeconomic group according to the criteria of this study. Thirty students were seven years of age, thirty were eight years of age, thirty were nine years of age, and twenty-nine were ten years of age. The thirtieth student placed in the age ten grouping had just had
his eleventh birthday prior to the testing.

**Tests of Hypotheses**

Hypotheses One, Two, Three and Four presented a problem in rejecting or accepting the null hypotheses in that they do not contrast groups or test relationships. For this reason percentages will be discussed but classical acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses will not be possible. Table 3 records the percentages.

Hypothesis One stated that seven year olds will score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Thirteen of the thirty students or forty-three percent, did score above a stage two. The null hypothesis stating that seven year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is rejected.

Hypothesis Two stated that eight year olds will score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Eleven of the thirty students, or thirty-seven percent, did score above a stage two. The null hypothesis stating that eight year olds will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is rejected.

Hypothesis Three stated that nine year olds will score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Fifteen of the thirty, or fifty percent, students did score above a stage two. The null hypothesis stating that nine year olds will not score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is rejected.
TABLE 3
Percentage of Students Above Stage Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Students Scoring At Stage Two or Below</th>
<th>Students Scoring Above Stage Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis Four stated that ten year olds will score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Twenty of the thirty students, or sixty-seven percent, did score above a stage two. The null hypothesis stating that ten years will not score above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview is rejected. Of the 120 students, fifty-nine scored above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Five stated that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between intelligence and the stage of moral development. Hypothesis Six stated that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between economic status and moral development. Hypothesis Seven stated that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between achievement as measured by standardized tests and the level of moral development.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength of the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Table 4 presents the results for Hypothesis Five. Table 4 indicates an overall correlation coefficient of 0.3184 (P = 0.000). Hypothesis five was rejected. While a relationship is shown, it lacks statistical significance.
TABLE 4
Correlation of Independent Variables to Stage of Moral Maturity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence Quotient</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.3184</td>
<td>0.1565</td>
<td>0.2769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p=0.000)</td>
<td>(p=0.044)</td>
<td>(p=0.001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The null hypothesis of no relationship between intelligence and moral development for seven to ten year olds is accepted.

Hypothesis Six states that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between economic status and moral development. Table 4 indicates a correlation coefficient of .1565 (P=0.044), which is not significant. Hypothesis Six was rejected. While a relationship between the two variables, socioeconomic status and moral development, is shown, it lacks statistical significance. The null hypothesis of no relationship between socioeconomic status and moral development for seven to ten year olds is accepted.

Hypothesis Seven states that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between achievement as measured by standardized tests and the level of moral development. Table 4 indicates a correlation coefficient of 0.2769 (P=0.001), which is not significant. Hypothesis Seven was rejected. While a relationship is shown, it lacks statistical significance. The null hypothesis of no relationship between achievement and moral development for seven to ten year olds is accepted.

In this chapter, the sample was described. The statistical analysis and results were given. Chapter Five will give a summary of the findings and implications for future study.
Chapter 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the moral development of children, ages seven to ten. The study focused on two major questions. The first being if younger children are capable of exceeding theoretical expectations in their moral development. The second, if intelligence, socioeconomic status, and achievement affect the moral development of seven to ten year olds.

Research Methodology

One hundred and twenty randomly selected students, ages seven to ten, from the Goochland County School System participated in this study. Using percentages and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, statistical data were analyzed to test seven hypotheses. The hypotheses being:

Hypothesis One - Seven year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Two - Eight year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Three - Nine year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Four - Ten year olds will score above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview.

Hypothesis Five - In younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between intelligence and the stage of
The instrument used to measure moral development was the Moral Judgment Interview Form A compiled by Kohlberg. School record data was used for determining socioeconomic status and The Science Research Associates composite achievement percentile scores and Intelligence Quotient Scores were utilized as recorded from previous school data.

**Summary of Findings**

The first four Hypotheses, Hypothesis One, Hypothesis Two, Hypothesis Three, and Hypothesis Four can not be accepted or rejected in the classical sense since they do not contrast groups or test relationships. For the purpose of this study, percentages are given to indicate those students that scored above stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview and on this basis these Hypotheses were accepted. Table 1 contains the group percentages reported by age. Individual scores are reported in Appendices three, four, five, and six. Tables 2, 3, and 4 contain the findings. The null hypothesis for Hypotheses One, Two, Three and Four were rejected based on percentages.
Hypothesis Five, Six, Seven, and Eight were rejected based on statistical data reported when using The Pearson Product Moment Correlation. While the variables listed in Hypothesis Five, Hypothesis Six, Hypothesis Seven, and Hypothesis Eight showed a positive relationship, they were not statistically significant. The null hypotheses were accepted.

Conclusions

As a result of the findings, it can be stated that in this study results tend to support that younger children were capable of reaching higher levels of moral development.

For Hypothesis 1, seven year olds scored above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Thirteen of the thirty students or forty-three percent scored above a stage two.

For Hypothesis 2, eight year olds scored above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Eleven of the thirty students or thirty-seven percent scored above a stage two.

For Hypothesis 3, nine year olds scored above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Fifteen of the thirty students or fifty percent scored above a stage two.

For Hypothesis 4, ten year olds scored above a stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Twenty of the thirty students or sixty-seven percent scored above a stage two. For the group of the 120 students in this study, fifty-nine or forty-nine percent
scored above stage two.

Hypothesis Five states that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between intelligence and the stage of moral development. Hypothesis Six states that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between economic status and moral development. Hypothesis Seven states that in younger children (ages seven to ten) there is a positive relationship between achievement as measured by standardized tests and the level of moral development. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength of the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The results were not statistically significant.

**Discussion**

Children ages seven to ten were administered Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview without modifications. They appeared to understand all items and responded accordingly. Almost half of the students tested scored at higher levels of moral development than most researchers in the area of moral development indicate would be expected. These findings conflict with the study of fifty boys ages ten to twenty-five (Kohlberg, Kramer). In that study it was concluded that most subjects age ten scored below stage two. Kohlberg.

In another study (Krebs and Gillmore) with children ages
five to fourteen it was concluded that Kohlberg's stages were found to be inaccurate by one-half a stage. The present research indicates that there is a difference between Kohlberg's determination of the stage at which children seven to ten will achieve and the findings of the present study.

In contrast to the findings for the first four hypotheses the researcher found that intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status, and achievement did not correlate with moral development. The findings that moral maturity is not dependent on intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status or achievement level conflict with the findings of Kohlberg. The results of this study tend to support Sicoli's research that intelligence does not correlate with moral development. (Sicoli)

In Sicoli's study of five second grade classes it was found that intelligence did not correlate with moral development. These results also tend to support Saltstein and Osgood's research where in a study of forty children, grades 1, 3, 5, and 8, they did not find a correlation between Intelligence Quotient and moral development stage. (Saltstein and Osgood)

Kohlberg's longitudinal study which correlated socioeconomic status and moral maturity found results of positive correlation which the present study did not find. (Kohlberg, Colby, Gibbs, Lieberman, 1980)

The findings of the present study also conflict with Salili's research. In a study of 1485 Iranian subjects, socioeconomic status
was found to effect moral judgment. While the present study found a relationship between socioeconomic status and moral maturity, it was not a statistically significant one. However, the specific definitions used for socioeconomic status for this study are different from classifications used for other studies. This prevents comparisons.

Studies (Weiner, Peter, Krogh) have indicated that achievement motivation is related to stage of moral development. This study reviewed academic achievement in relation to moral maturity in children ages seven to ten. No significant correlation was found. The present study reviewed academic achievement by using SRA Test Scores. Since the other studies mentioned were interested more in motivation, a close comparison is unrealistic.

While the present research provides implications for further study of younger children ages seven to ten, it is essential to review this research in light of the limitations. The validity of the test for younger children is a concern. The children in this study did respond to the questions and their recorded answers appeared to have a logical base so that the researcher believes the questions were understood. This does not mean to imply that the test was valid for a younger population.

The reliability of the test administrator could affect the results of the study. The test administrator had not been familiar
with the test until the present administration.

Most important of all is the inter-judge reliability and the reliability of the scorer. The tendency of the scorer to rate higher than the independent judge and the fact that one score prevents one hundred percent agreement within one stage must be weighed when reviewing the statistical data and conclusions of this study. A letter from the independent judge is included in Appendix 7. On the other criteria mentioned for inter-judge reliability the standards of fifty percent complete agreement and seventy-five percent within one stage were met.

In Kohlberg's early work, agreement was rated within a third of a stage. This was because a thirteen point scale was used to differentiate between stages. This thirteen point scale is no longer used by Kohlberg. The nine point scale was believed to be more efficient. Therefore reliability must be measured in halves.

While this study must be reviewed in light of its limitations it is one of a very few studying the moral development of younger children. Literature in the field of moral development shows conflicting conclusions. Additional studies are needed to provide further information.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this study suggest that younger children can reach higher levels of moral development. Since most research
deals with older children and adults, researchers need to study the moral development of younger children.

Because none of the variables, Intelligence Quotient, Socioeconomic Status, or Achievement were significant in this study when studying students seven to ten years of age, further studies dealing with curriculum, instruction, and teaching techniques in moral education for younger children are also needed.

Studies in curriculum and the development of curriculum for moral development will lead to an understanding of how young children learn and how far they can go in moral development. Additional research could expose variables not yet studied. Research with democratic classrooms (Mosher, 1978) could be further expanded to include younger children. This could have curriculum implications in this area.

The study of the potential of younger children to reach higher levels of moral development may open new areas or research. Just how far young children can proceed, what variables do affect their moral growth, and what teaching strategies and curriculum offerings are most helpful are all questions which remain unanswered.

Studies such as Turiel's lead the researcher and the educator to a better understanding of how to interact with children. Turiel found that one stage above the child's stage is the most effective level at which to communicate. Further research is needed in areas relating to improved communication. (Turiel, 1969)
Dewey stressed the importance of moral development and moral education. He felt this to be the cornerstone of the educational process. To study again the ideas of earlier educators is of importance to further research.

Most important of all is the need to study younger children, to know how much they can learn, in order to avoid missing the most important stages of learning. If Bloom is correct in saying that "eighty percent of a child's intelligence is developed by age eight", the implications for moral development of children ages seven to ten are astounding. An important body of knowledge may yet be developed around younger children and their moral development.

The last section of this study has given a description of research methodology, a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research. The major goal of this study was to draw attention to the potential for moral development of younger children, ages seven to ten.
Appendix 1

Dear Parents,

Your child has been randomly selected to participate in a study if you give permission. This study is being conducted by me in order to complete my doctoral work at the College of William and Mary. Approximately one hundred children will participate. At no time will the results of the study become a part of the child’s records nor will your child’s name be mentioned. Only statistics will be used. If you do not choose to have your child participate this will in no way affect your child’s school record.

Your permission will allow me to look at your child’s school records and to have a test of twenty minutes administered to your child. The test asks what your child would do in certain situations and attempts to determine your child’s judgment in social situations. If you have any questions concerning the test or the study, please call me at 556-4333.

I would be most grateful for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Gail Newton, Principal
Kanawha Elementary School

____ I give permission for my child to participate in the study.

____ I do not wish for my child to participate in the study.

Child’s Name ____________________________

Parent Signature __________________________

Date ________
Appendix 2

Instrumentation Description

Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview

The testing instrument used in this study is an interview test developed by Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University. It consists of presenting three moral dilemmas to students. Each dilemma represents a conflict between two issues concerning morality. The subject makes a choice as to which issue is most important. Additional questions follow each dilemma in order to determine the subject's reasoning (Colby, 1981).

Scoring is done by awarding points to the moral stage that the answer addresses. In some cases two stages may get points. The stage with the largest portion of points is the major stage. The subjects moral maturity stage is calculated by multiplying each stage by the number of points at that stage and dividing the sum of the products by the total number of points assigned and then multiplying by one hundred (Colby, 1981).
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### OVERALL PROTOCOL SCORE

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Appendix 4

Analysis of I.Q., Socioeconomic Status, Achievement, and Stage of Moral Development for Seven Year Olds

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Appendix 5

Analysis of I.Q., Socioeconomic Status, and Achievement With Stage of Moral Development of Eight Year Olds

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# Appendix 6

Analysis of I.Q., Socioeconomic Status, and Achievement With Stage of Moral Development of Nine Year Olds

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## Appendix 7

Analysis of I.Q., Socioeconomic Status, and Achievement With Stage of Moral Development of Ten Year Olds

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Appendix 8

Letter From Independent Judge

April 25, 1983

Ms. Gail B. Newton
P.O. Box 454
Powhatan, VA 23139

Dear Ms. Newton:

Please excuse the handwritten letter, but our typewriter is not working today and I knew that you wanted this as soon as possible. Regarding our conversation this morning, let me try to clarify the distinction between the "old" 13 point moral judgment stage scale, and the "new" 9 point scale. In the past we used a 13 point scale to report moral judgment stage scores from Moral Judgment Interviews (i.e. 1, 1(2), 2(1), 2, 2(3), 3(2), 3, 3(4), 4(3), 4, 4(5), 5(4), 5). However, in doing the data analysis for the report of our 20 year longitudinal study of moral judgment (see reference below), we discovered that a 9 point scale yielded more reliable and valid scores (i.e. 1, 1/2, 2, 2/3, 3, 3/4, 4, 4/5, 5). Thus we now suggest that all researchers using the MJI report scores using the 9 point scale instead of the 13 point scale, both for individual stage scores and inter-rater reliability percent agreement.

As far as inter-rater reliability is concerned, we have set no absolute standards for acceptable percent agreement among raters. Ideally we would like to have exact global stage agreement be about 50%, agreement within 1/2 stage to be about 75-80%, and agreement within 1 stage to be 100%. However, given the nature of your interviews, and the guess scores that had to be used, these percentages might be a little bit lower. Again, though, the decision on acceptable levels of reliability must ultimately rest with you and your committee.

Finally, a thought about your data: If your subjects are all in the 7-10 age range, I think it would be very unlikely to find any subjects scoring at a full stage 3, given the results obtained in a large number of similar studies. The most likely scores would be in the 1, 1/2, 2, and possibly 2/3 range. I don't know if this will be of any use to you, but I thought I'd pass it on anyway.
I hope this has been helpful. Please let me know if I can be of any more assistance to you. Best of luck to you as you complete your project.

Sincerely yours,

Mark B. Tappan  
Senior Research Assistant

Colby, Ame, Kohlberg, Lawrence, Gibbs, John, Lieberman, and Marcus.  
References

Books


Colby, Anne, John Gibbs, Lawrence Kohlberg, Betsy Speicher-Dubin,


Magazines and Journal Research


Vita

Gail Brooke Newton

Education:

1980-1983 The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Williamsburg, Virginia
Doctor of Education

1976-1979 The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Williamsburg, Virginia
Certificate of Advanced Study

1969-1971 The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Williamsburg, Virginia
Master of Education

1964-1966 Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
Bachelor of Science

1962-1964 Richard Bland College
Petersburg, Virginia

Professional:

1982-Present Principal
Goochland County Schools
Goochland, Virginia

1979-1982 Supervisor of Instruction
Powhatan County Schools
Powhatan, Virginia

1975-1979 General Supervisor and Assistant Superintendent
Charles City Schools
Charles City, Virginia

1974-1975 National Education Consultant
Educational Consultant Services
Coffeyville, Kansas

1966-1974 Teacher and Reading Specialist
Petersburg City Schools
Petersburg, Virginia

1974-1980 Adjunct Instructor
John Tyler Community College, Chester, VA
Virginia State College, Petersburg, VA
Awards:

1970  Received the Outstanding Young Educator Award
      Petersburg Jaycees

1971  Included in Outstanding Young Women in America

1977  Included in Who's Who in Education

1982  Inducted in Kappa Delta Pi
Abstract

A Study Of Selected Factors Related To Moral Development In Children Ages Seven To Ten

Gail Brooke Newton, Ed.D.

The College of William and Mary in Virginia, May, 1983

Chairman: Dr. Robert Hanny

The purpose of this research was to study younger children ages seven to ten in order to determine if younger children could exceed stage two in moral development as tested by Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. Intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status, and achievement were studied to determine if there was a correlation between these variables and the stage of moral development in younger children, ages seven to ten.

One hundred and twenty students in the Goochland County, Virginia school system participated in this study. They were administered Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview from which their moral stage was assessed. School records and scores on the Science Research Associates test were used to compile data on intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status, and achievement.

It was hypothesized that 1) younger children ages seven to ten could exceed stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview and that 2) intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status, and achievement were correlated significantly with stage of moral development in children ages seven to ten.

It was concluded that nearly fifty percent of the students tested exceeded stage two on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview. It was also concluded that intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status and achievement were not significantly correlated with stage of moral development in younger children ages seven to ten.

Further study is needed to explore the development of younger children ages seven to ten in the area of moral development. Further study is also needed to determine what variables will correlate significantly with moral development. An outgrowth of this research could be the development of curriculum and teaching strategies in moral development for younger children ages seven to ten.