a new approach to assessing the cognitive and affective character of parent-child moral encounters

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introduction

assumptions

1. Need for “tailor-made” vignettes
   Rich Context, Child as an agent
2. Measures of affect as well as cognition
   Parent-child Interaction, Children’s understanding
3. Comparisons between child’s and parent’s understanding of the encounter, including the child as an agent
method

design

- Mini-longitudinal study

TIME 1

Phase 1:
Parent keeps a diary for a week

↓

Story-construction

↓

Phase 2:
Child is interviewed

TIME 2

Phase 1:
Parent keeps a diary for a week

↓

Story-construction

↓

Phase 2:
Child is interviewed

1 year
participants

- 11 parent-child dyads
- 3 males, 8 females
- 3y4m – 5y3m
  (M = 4y1m, SD = 204 days)
- A preschool in New York City

- 11 parents completed keeping a diary,
- 8 children completed the interview
  (3 children dropped out from the interview)

procedures

Phase 1 (Parental Diary)

- One-week-log of transgressions
- Two detailed report
  1. Situation & Context
  2. Parent-child interaction
     (verbal, behavioral, and emotional)
  3. Parent’s construction of child’s understanding of the transgression after parent has handled it.
procedures

- Schematized Facial Expression Scale

\[
\text{Positive: } +3 \quad +2 \quad +1 \quad 0 \quad -1 \quad -2 \quad -3
\]

neutral

- negative

- I showed clear anger and shouted her (-3).
- She seemed unaffected emotionally, had almost a little smile on her face (+1).

procedures

Story-construction

- On the basis of each parental diary, two transgression-stories were constructed and presented to the child in Phase 2.
procedures

Phase 2 (Child Interview)

1. Five facial card depicting five different emotions were used as a “non-verbal” measure of expressing children’s own and other’s emotions.

![Cards Depicting Five Different Emotions](adapted from the Test of Emotion Comprehension (TEC); Pons, Harris, & de Rosnay, 2004)

The child’s understandings of the five emotions are confirmed
procedures

2. Each child was asked to role-play in the matched constructed story with the aid of dolls. A child was asked to pick dolls in the story.
procedures

3. Transgression-story was presented to the child in “as-if” form.

Story is presented to the child
procedures

4. Child had Semi-structured interview asking:
   - his/her thoughts and feelings while the parent disciplined the child in the story
   - his/her moral judgment of the transgression and the reasoning
   - his/her own and other’s feelings and the reasoning if he/she transgresses again.

procedures

The child is asked his/her feelings
selected preliminary results

kinds of transgression

Purpose:
To explore the nature of young children’s everyday transgressions from parental perspectives

- Younger Group (3 years old)
  \( n = 6, M = 3y \, 8m \, 27d, SD = 70.46 \, \text{days} \)
- Older Group (4 years or older)
  \( n = 5, M = 4y \, 6m \, 21d, SD = 193.27 \, \text{days} \)
- Total \( n = 11, M = 4y \, 1m \, 8d, SD = 204.61 \, \text{days} \)
kinds of transgression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Younger Group</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older Group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Moral Harm</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moral Fairness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social Conventional/Everyday Manner</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Prudential/Private, Autonomy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disobedience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wish, Want (e.g., “I want it.” tantrum)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mixed (more than two categories)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uncertain</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

parent-child interaction

- Younger Group (3 years old)
  
  $n = 4$, $M = 3y 9m 30d$, $SD = 41.52$ days

- Older Group (4 years or older)
  
  $n = 4$, $M = 4y 5m 24d$, $SD = 211.40$ days

- Total $n = 8$, $M = 4y 2m 11d$, $SD = 198.520$ days

Purpose:

To explore how cognitively and affectively parents interacted with their children when they dealt with the transgressions.
parent-child interaction

- Cognitive Aspect (verbal & behavioral)
- Coding (reduced from 11 to 3 discipline categories):
  A: Induction
  (e.g., Pointing out consequences for the other)
  B: Power Assertion
  (e.g., physical punishment, material deprivation)
  C: Indirect
  (e.g., distraction)

parent-child interaction

- Frequency of Cognitive Interaction
  (Discipline Techniques)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Category</th>
<th>Parents of Younger Group</th>
<th>Parents of Older Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Induction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Power Assertion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Indirect</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of discipline techniques used differed parent by parent.
parent-child interaction

- Affective Aspect (emotion with strength)
  - Coding:
    1. Negative
    2. Neutral
    3. Positive
    4. Mixed (positive and negative)
- Intensity:
  -3 to +3 (Schematized Facial Expression Scale)

parent-child interaction

- Frequency of Affective Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Younger Group</th>
<th>Older Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
parent-child interaction

- Summary (Cognitive & Affective Aspects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Affective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show Negative Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include A (Induction)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Include A (Induction)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Upper: Parents of Younger Group (f)
Lower: Parents of Older Group (f)

children’s understandings of transgressions

Purpose:
To explore the interplay of cognition and affect in children’s understanding of previously encountered transgressions.

“Will you ______ [do the transgression] again?” “Why?”
children’s understandings of transgressions

- Cognitive Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasoning across 2 Stories</th>
<th>Younger Group</th>
<th>Older Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same Reasoning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Reasoning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coding 1: Non-moral  4: Empathetic/Social relational  
2: External  5: No answer/idea  
3: Moral Autonomy

children’s understandings of transgressions

- Cognitive Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Transgressions</th>
<th>Non-Moral</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Moral Autonomy</th>
<th>Empathetic/Social Relational</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral Harm; Moral Fairness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Conventional/Everyday Manner; Prudential/Private, Autonomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience; Wish/Wanted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Left: Younger Group (f)   Right: Older Group (f)
children’s understandings of transgressions

- Affective Aspects: Own Emotion
  
  “How would you [transgressor/victimizer] feel if you did it [the transgression] again?” “Why?”

- Coding:
  - Positive (Happy, Alright)
  - Negative (Sad, Angry, Scared)
  - Mixed (combination of both positive and negative)

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![Bar chart showing the comparison between Younger Group and Older Group in terms of Positive and Negative Affective Aspects.](chart.png)
children’s understandings of transgressions

• Affective Aspects: Other’s Emotions
  “How do you think your ___ [victim/opponent] would feel if you did it [the transgression] again?” “Why?”

• Coding:
  • Positive (Happy, Alright)
  • Negative (Sad, Angry, Scared)
  • Mixed (combination of both positive and negative)
disparity between parental perceptions and children’s understandings

- Parental Perceptions after Handling the Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents of Younger Children</th>
<th>Parents of Older Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent thinks his/her child understood that the transgression is wrong/why.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent thinks his/her child did not understand.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent is not sure whether his/her child understood or not.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not categorized answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Disparity of Parental Perceptions of Children’s Understanding vs. Children’s Actual Understandings (reasoning from interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents of Younger Children</th>
<th>Parents of Older Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent overestimates child’s understanding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent underestimates child’s understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Disparity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
future study

• Further Study with Recruitment of More Participants
• Study in Japan
thank you.

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