Admiration in adolescents’ judgments on situations involving hurting

Admiração nos julgamentos dos adolescentes sobre situações que envolvem o machucar

Admiración en los juicios de los adolescentes sobre situaciones que involucran hacer daño

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Paulo Yoo Chul Choi
Doctorate Student in School Psychology and Human Development
Institution: Universidade de São Paulo
Address: São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: paulo.choi@usp.br

Priscila Bonato Galhardo
Doctorate Student in School Psychology and Human Development
Institution: Universidade de São Paulo
Address: São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: priscilabonatogalhardo@gmail.com

Betânia Alves Veiga Dell Agli
Doctorate in Education
Institution: Centro Universitário das Faculdades Associadas de Ensino
Address: São João da Boa Vista, São Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: betaniadellagli@gmail.com

Maria Thereza Costa Coelho de Souza
Doctorate in School Psychology and Human Development
Institution: Universidade de São Paulo
Address: São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: mtdesouza@usp.br

Luciana Maria Caetano
Doctorate in School Psychology and Human Development
Institution: Universidade de São Paulo
Address: São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: lmcaetano@usp.br
ABSTRACT
This article aims to characterize judgments about situations that involve causing harm and investigate whether judgments of situations in which participants’ idols differed from judgments made for episodes involving generic characters. The research used two questionnaires: the sociodemographic questionnaire and the questionnaire on the interference of admiration in judgments about causing harm, applied to 63 adolescents aged between 12 and 18 years old. A coding system was developed based on the participants' responses, guided by the principles of Social Domain Theory, going through a rigorous process of dialogical reliability between researchers specialized in the subject. This coding system resulted in the following analysis categories: moral concern (justice, empathy, differences, and moral intervention), conventional concern (social expectation, legislation, religion, parental authority, and conventional intervention), concern with the situation (situational) and in others (it depends, and without justification). Additionally, a quantitative analysis was conducted using the method of dialogical reliability to map the presence of the five criteria of the moral domain: concern for others, adherence to the rule, generalization of the rule, independence from authority, and universalization of the rule, aiming to determine which elements hindered or facilitated the categorization of responses within the moral domain. The comparison between judgments involving generic characters and idols was conducted using the Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney tests to ascertain the presence of significant differences between the judgments. The results indicated that admiration did not interfere with judgments in three of the four situations (accidental harm, psychological harm, and benefit), suggesting that the majority of adolescents judged situations with justifications that did not consider concern for causing harm to others. Further research needs to be conducted to investigate why there are few moral responses in judgments about different situations involving harm.

Keywords: Moral Development. Morality. Judgment. Adolescent Development.

RESUMO
Este artigo tem como objetivo caracterizar julgamentos sobre situações que envolvem causar danos e investigar se os julgamentos de situações em que os ídolos dos participantes diferiram dos julgamentos feitos para episódios envolvendo personagens genéricos. A pesquisa utilizou dois questionários: o questionário sociodemográfico e o questionário sobre a interferência da admiração nos julgamentos sobre causar dano, aplicados a 63 adolescentes com idade entre 12 e 18 anos. Foi desenvolvido um sistema de codificação a partir das respostas dos participantes, orientado pelos princípios da Teoria dos Domínios Sociais, passando por um rigoroso processo de confiabilidade dialógica entre pesquisadores especializados no assunto. Esse sistema de codificação resultou nas seguintes categorias de análise: preocupação moral (justiça, empatia, diferenças e intervenção moral), preocupação convencional (expectativa social, legislação, religião, autoridade parental e intervenção convencional), preocupação com a situação (situacional) e em outros (depende, e sem justificativa). Adicionalmente foi realizada uma análise quantitativa utilizando o método da confiabilidade dialógica para mapear a presença dos
cinco critérios do domínio moral: preocupação com os outros, adesão à regra, generalização da regra, independência da autoridade e universalização da regra, visando determinar quais elementos dificultaram ou facilitaram a categorização das respostas dentro do domínio moral. A comparação entre julgamentos envolvendo personagens genéricos e ídolos foi realizada por meio dos testes Wilcoxon e Mann-Whitney para verificar a presença de diferenças significativas entre os julgamentos. Os resultados indicaram que a admiração não interferiu nos julgamentos em três das quatro situações (dano acidental, dano psicológico e benefício), sugerindo que a maioria dos adolescentes julgou situações com justificativas que não consideraram a preocupação em causar danos a terceiros. Mais pesquisas precisam ser realizadas para investigar por que há poucas respostas morais nos julgamentos sobre diferentes situações que envolvem danos.


RESUMEN
Este artículo tiene como objetivo caracterizar juicios sobre situaciones que implican causar daño e investigar si los juicios de situaciones en las que los ídolos de los participantes difirieron de los juicios hechos para episodios que involucran personajes genéricos. La investigación utilizó dos cuestionarios: el cuestionario sociodemográfico y el cuestionario sobre la interferencia de la admiración en los juicios sobre causar daño, aplicados a 63 adolescentes de entre 12 y 18 años. Se desarrolló un sistema de codificación a partir de las respuestas de los participantes, orientado por los principios de la Teoría de los Dominios Sociales, pasando por un riguroso proceso de confiabilidad dialógica entre investigadores especializados en el tema. Este sistema de codificación resultó en las siguientes categorías de análisis: preocupación moral (justicia, empatía, diferencias e intervención moral), preocupación convencional (expectativa social, legislación, religión, autoridad parental e intervención convencional), preocupación por la situación (situacional) y otros (depende, y sin justificación). Además, se realizó un análisis cuantitativo utilizando el método de confiabilidad dialógica para mapear la presencia de los cinco criterios del dominio moral: preocupación por los demás, adherencia a la regla, generalización de la regla, independencia de la autoridad y universalización de la regla, con el fin de determinar qué elementos dificultaron o facilitaron la categorización de las respuestas dentro del dominio moral. La comparación entre juicios que involucran personajes genéricos e ídolos se realizó mediante las pruebas de Wilcoxon y Mann-Whitney para verificar la presencia de diferencias significativas entre los juicios. Los resultados indicaron que la admiración no interferió en los juicios en tres de las cuatro situaciones (daño acidental, daño psicológico y beneficio), sugiriendo que la mayoría de los adolescentes juzgaron situaciones con justificaciones que no consideraron la preocupación por causar daño a terceros. Se necesita realizar más investigación para investigar por qué hay pocas respuestas morales en los juicios sobre diferentes situaciones que involucran daños.
**1 INTRODUCTION**

The Social Domain Theory (SDT) seeks to understand the development of social cognition and the types of judgments that individuals establish through interaction with their environment (Nucci, 2001; Turiel, 1983; Yoo & Smetana, 2022). It is a theory that takes social interaction as a principle and investigates how this process of relating to and between people develops multiple ways of thinking about the social world.

The main researchers of the theory defend that people are active in the construction of knowledge, developing through interaction with their social environment a critical sense to create hypotheses and theories about the experienced events (Turiel & Nucci, 2018). From a very young age individuals interact with each other, with the cultural environment they are inserted in and with themselves, and end up developing particular knowledge about the world in order to experience, understand and transform the social world based on their experience and life history.

In order to study the cognitive, developmental and social process, the SDT listed the domains of social knowledge, namely: conventional, moral and psychological. While the conventional domain is based on organization norms related to the social context, covering the regulations originating from tradition, religion and social expectation (Gingo, Roded & Turiel, 2017; Turiel, 1983), the concepts based on justice, human rights, and well-being are directly linked to the moral domain which is inherent to social relations, culturally immutable and against arbitrariness for some particular preference (Nucci, 2001). The psychological domain represents the concern that the human being has with him or herself, encompassing aspects of physical and mental health, and of personal choices, preferences and interests (Nucci, Camino & Sapiro, 1996; Nucci, 2013).

The importance of categorizing judgments in social knowledge domains is linked to the need to understand the limits that people themselves impose on
them to shape their attitudes, judgments, and choices. It is through this distinction that we can understand the reason for how individuals make their decisions and direct their behavior, since there is a correlation between type of judgment, social action, and cultural content (Turiel, 1983, 2008).

In certain situations, the differentiation between domains, especially between the moral and the conventional, can be tenuous (Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2013; Yoo & Smetana, 2022). Therefore, SDT researchers listed five criteria for categorizing judgments into moral standards, which are: 1) justification with concern for the other and in dialogue with justice, human rights and people's well-being (e.g., you may not hit the other because it hurts the person); 2) obligatory rule (e.g., it is forbidden to hit a person, this is non-negotiable); 3) generalizable rule (e.g., no one may hit a person); 4) independence and no-contingency of authority (e.g., no one may change the rule: it is forbidden to hurt the other. It is super wrong to hit people, I may not do this even if my parents order me to); 5) universalizable reasoning (e.g., hitting the other is wrong everywhere) (Killen & Rutland, 2011).

1.1 CONCERN FOR THE OTHER

SDT's pioneering research sought to emphasize the distinction between moral and conventional conceptions in people's judgments throughout human development (Nucci et al., 2017; Turiel, 1983). The data showed that very young children are able to make this distinction by feeling empathetic. However, this distinction is made in a more rudimentary way, since it is through the accumulation of interactions with the environment that the cognitive structures are able to reorganize themselves and acquire the ability to think about more elaborate social events (Smetana & Ball, 2019; Yoo & Smetana, 2022).

In adolescence, the distinction of domains accompanies the development of the concept of justice. Justice understood as the law that balances relationships is an essential notion for thinking about the moral domain, as it allows thinking about inter-individual relationships and coordinating personal interests with the needs of others (Piaget, 1932/1965).
In this phase, individuals cease to be guided by more egalitarian and simple aspects, and start to incorporate the principles of reciprocity, considering the individual differences in their judgments and seeking collective well-being in their responses (Gingo, Roded & Turiel, 2017; Turiel, 1983). It is only from the beginning of adolescence that conceptions about justice become more comprehensive and universally applicable, enabling individuals to coordinate interpersonal situations in a more complex and profound way (Milnitsky-Sapiro, Turiel, & Nucci, 2006; Smetana et al., 2012).

However, the development of the justice concept leads to a decline in moral responses in preadolescents. Such a group has less moral justification compared to older children and adolescents. The research by Nucci and Turiel (2009) demonstrated that: 1) children tend to focus more on the moral implications of a situation instead of leading to a judgment according to the presented problem; 2) preadolescents demonstrate greater ease in associating situational information by increasing social understanding, but they are more likely to be influenced by the ambiguity of moral judgments since there is a tendency to confuse the right to have a personal choice with the right to exercise morality (confusion of psychological and moral aspects); 3) adolescents are better able to coordinate conflicting situations because they provide more complex solutions and make the distinction between their right to choose (psychological domain) and the restrictions established by moral obligation (moral domain). In this way, the conceptions of children and adolescents present quantitatively more moral responses than those of the preadolescent, illustratively representing such development through a “U” or a parable (Nucci, 2013; Nucci et al., 2017).

1.2 THE INFLUENCE OF ADMIRATION

The beginning of preadolescence is a phase marked by the search for autonomy and by the freedom of choice (development of the psychological domain). Several preadolescents rigidly break with family habits and customs to achieve a more unique and personal personality (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv & Ben-
Horin, 1996). In this phase, they tend to decrease their enchantment by their parents and start looking for other admiration figures in order to increase their social repertoire in a distance to authority and to expand the range of possible interpretations to think the world (Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987).

Admiration is understood as an emotional response to a higher instance when witnessing valorous acts (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Schindler, 2014). It is an exclusively human emotion that provides individuals with a model to learn adaptive behaviors, to understand how to relate to different situations in life, and to develop principles and values (Onu, Kessler, & Smith, 2016).

Admiration tends to be a feeling that modifies personal experiences and can be important for understanding the domains of social knowledge. Although other individual dimensions have been the focus of studies of consistency and inconsistencies in moral judgment (Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2013), such as religion and the legitimacy of the religious norm (Nucci, 2001), and informational assumptions (Wainry, 2000), admiration has not yet found much space in SDT research. Other constructs such as the type of relationship between peers, the relationship with authority, the diversity of cultural practices, among others (for a review see Yoo & Smetana, 2022), are still the main topics of study for understanding the domains of judgment.

The research by Choi and collaborators (2020) showed that the admiration variable influenced the judgment of children about hurting. That is, the modification of the actor of a given situation significantly changed the degree of fairness in the responses of the participants when judging the event. The admired character was always less guilty than a generic person (unspecified – e.g., a sister, a boy, a girl) when carrying out a moral transgression.

Taking into account the fact that admiration is important in adolescence (Raviv et al., 1996; Onu et al., 2016), that this variable changed the judgments about hurting the other among children (Choi, Caetano, & Dell ‘Agli, 2020), and that it is little analyzed in the correlation with studies on different types of judgments in the SDT approach (Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2013), the objectives of the study were: to characterize the judgments about situations that involve hurting (1. unintentionally, 2. verbally and psychologically, 3. to be able to take a
person's belonging, and 4. out of revenge) and investigate whether judgments of situations in which the participants’ idols were different from the judgments made to episodes whose authors are generic characters (when the subjects are indeterminate, for example, “one sister hurt the other sister unintentionally”).

2 METHOD

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of 63 adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age (M = 14.51; SD = 1.69), of which 30 (47.61%) were male and 33 (52.38%) were feminine. Of the participants, 29 (46.03%) claimed to be Christians, 26 (41.26%) claimed to have no religion and 8 (12.69%) individuals who were from other religions, such as: Spiritism, Messianic, Umbanda, Candomblé, and Buddhist. The participants were students from a public school that had projects to encourage moral development, located on the west region in São Paulo, Capital.

2.2 MEASURES

Sociodemographic Questionnaire: It was designed to ascertain the characteristics related to the age, gender, and religion of the participants.

Questionnaire about the interference of admiration on the judgment about hurting: It was inspired by the study by Choi and collaborators (2020) and contained four situations about hurting: accidentally, psychologically, to get a benefit, out of revenge. In a first step, the situations were presented to the participants with the generic actors (non-specific characters such as: “an older sister”, “an adult” and “a boy”), namely: an older sister hurt the younger unintentionally (accidentally), an adult called a person a monster because he or she is different (psychologically), a boy wanted to hurt a girl to take her belongings (benefit), and a girl hit a boy because he had harmed her first (revenge).

Each event was accompanied by the following questions: What this person did, was it just or not just? Give a score from 0 to 10 of how just or not just it was.
(This score was used to compare the judgment about the generic actor with the judgment about the idol). Why? (This question allowed the analysis of the justification). In this person's house there is a rule: it is forbidden to hurt people. Do you think it is obligatory to follow this rule in this situation? Why? (Used to investigate the rule's obligatory criterion). Do you think that this rule can be changed by someone because of this situation? Why? (Used to investigate the rule's generability criteria). What if that person were your father, your mother, or your teacher? Why? (Used to investigate the authority's legitimacy criterion). If you were in another country that does not have this rule, do you think that such a situation would remain just / not just (depending on the answer to the first item)? Why? (Used to investigate the rule's universalization criterion).

In a second step, the four situations and questions related to the degree of justice were reapplied, replacing the generic person with the participant's idol: imagine that your idol accidentally hurt your younger sister (accidentally); imagine that your idol called a person a monster because he or she is different (psychologically); imagine that your idol hurt a person to take his or her belongings (benefit); imagine that your idol hit someone who had harmed him or her first (revenge). The participant was also asked: From 0 to 10, how much do you admire this idol? What is the reason for your admiration? (Used to investigate the justification for such admiration).

2.3 PROCEDURE

Initially, the research project was presented to the school (convenience sample). After institutional acceptance, the parents received an information from the institution about the students' participation in the research together with the Informed Consent. Adolescents with the authorization of their parents were invited to participate in the research.

Individual interviews were conducted in a closed room provided by the school management. After a brief explanation of the project, the student who agreed to contribute to the study was invited to sign an Informed Assent Form. Before applying instrument questions, rapport was performed. Applicants started
the research with common questions such as: “How are you?”, “Are you fine?” and “Do you want to introduce yourself?” Each application lasted between 40 and 65 minutes. The researchers asked the questions orally and recorded the answers on computers. Interviews that did not provide answers to all questions in the questionnaire were excluded from the sample.

2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

From the responses of the participants was created a coding system based on the principles of SDT (Nucci et al., 2017; Turiel, 1983) which underwent a rigorous process of dialogical reliability among researchers specialized in the subject (Akerlind, 2005). This coding system resulted in the following analysis categories: moral concern (justice, empathy, differences, and moral intervention), conventional concern (social expectation, legislation, religion, parental authority, and conventional intervention), concern with the situation (situational) and in others (it depends, and without justification), as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Answers that showed justice linked to human rights</td>
<td>“Because the situation is totally unjust, the person has the right not to suffer”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Answers that showed the feeling of empathy for the other’s pain</td>
<td>“Because, imagine how the person would feel”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>Answers that showed respect for the difference between people</td>
<td>“Each one has his or her difference, and we need to respect it so as not to hurt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral intervention</td>
<td>Answers that showed only suggestions for moral interventions</td>
<td>“Because she hit on purpose and this hurts people, conversation is always the best way to ask for”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social expectations</td>
<td>Answers that showed concern with social expectation</td>
<td>“Because it’s ugly”, “What will people think about it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Domain</td>
<td>Justification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>Answers that showed the justification based on the law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Stealing leads to jail”, “Because this is against the law”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Answers that showed concern with the religious norm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s a sin. God doesn’t like it”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental authority</td>
<td>Answers that showed submission to parental authority and fear of punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because my mom told me this is wrong”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional intervention</td>
<td>Answers that showed suggestions for conventional interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because she should have told her father, trying to resolve things never works”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Answers that showed only suggestions for conventional interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because the situation is to blame”, “The person didn't want to do that”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends</td>
<td>Being subordinate to more information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because it depends on what happened before”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without justifications</td>
<td>No explication of the judgement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because it's like this”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. Authors’ elaboration based on the research data.

A quantitative analysis was also carried out, using the method of dialogical reliability, to map the presence of the five criteria of moral domain: concern for the other, obligatory the rule, generalization of the rule, independence of authority and universalization of the rule, in order to verify which element prevented or helped responses to be categorized as of moral domain.

The comparison between the judgments involving the generic characters and the idols was carried out using the Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney tests to ascertain the existence of a significant difference between the judgments.

3 RESULTS

The analysis of the justifications about the degree of justice of the four situations, carried out based on the coding system, is summarized in Table 2. We can see that, out of the four situations, in three the “conventional concern” (psychological, benefit and revenge) prevailed. In these, we had, albeit in a
smaller number, answers of “moral concern”, except in the accidental situation in which prevailed “concern with the situation” (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Coding system on justifications in the four situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidental</td>
<td>Social expectation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Hurting the other is ugly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>“It was accidental”, “it was unintentional”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without justification</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Because it’s like this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Because the adult was totally unfair, he is older, he should know how to respect the other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Because, imagine how the person would feel”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Each one has his or her difference, and we need to respect it so as not to hurt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social expectation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>“Goodness, an adult doing this? How ugly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“It’s a sin. God doesn’t like it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It depends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“It depends”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Because the situation is totally unjust, the person has the right not to suffer”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“This must have hurt a lot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral intervention</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Because she hit on purpose and this hurts people, conversation is always the best way to ask for”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>Social expectation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>“Because he is stealing, and this is ugly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Stealing leads to jail”, “Because this is against the law”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Hurting the other is a sin”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental authority</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Because my mom told me this is wrong”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional intervention</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“She must tell her mother”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Nobody deserves to be hurt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral intervention</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“She could have solved this in other ways, without hurting”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social expectation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>“Because revenge is wrong and ugly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Because if not, the person goes to hell”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental authority</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Because if not, her father hits her”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional intervention</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>“She has to ignore him”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It depends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“It depends on what happened before”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without justification</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“I don’t know how to justify”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. Authors’ elaboration based on the research data.

Table 3 shows the number of judgments categorized in moral domain and the number of answers that presented the five criteria, namely: justification with concern for the other, mandatory rule, generalization of the rule, independence of authority and universalization of the rule.
Table 3 - The number of judgments in the moral and non-moral domain, and of the five criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Accidental</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Revenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of justifications with the concern for the other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of answers with the obligatory criterion</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of answers with the generalization criterion</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of answers with the independence criterion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of answers with the universalization criterion</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of adolescents who judged the situation to be moral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Accidental</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Revenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of justifications with the concern for the other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. Authors’ elaboration based on the research data.

The situation that presented the most moral responses was hurting for a benefit (22 out of 63 responses), and in contrast, the situation that received the least responses in this domain was to hurt unintentionally (0 out of 63 responses).

The criteria that made it difficult to answer in all situations (that is, the 63 responses from the four situations), of adhering to the moral domain, were: the lack of justification linked to the concern for the other (identifying only 59 out of 252 justifications, which it is the total number of justifications in the 4 situations, that is, 63 participants x 4 situations) and the contingency of authority (detecting only 106 out of 252 responses in the dilemmas), indicating a certain submission and obedience to parents and teachers.

The comparison between judgments about situations with generic and with admired characters (idol) is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Comparison between situations with generic and with idols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Accidental</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Revenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>GE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judged as just (number)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judged as unjust (number)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judged neither as just nor unjust (number)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average degree of justice</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standard deviation of the degree of justice

| Value | 0.55 | 1.17 | 1.65 | 1.56 | 0.91 | 1.06 | 2.33 | 2.18 |

Note. GE = situations with generic actors; ID = situations with idols. Source: Authors’ elaboration based on the research data.

Despite the different averages presented, using the Wilcoxon test there was no statistically significant difference between the values in the accidental situation ($Z = -1.75; p = 0.80$), in the psychological situation ($Z = -0.27; p = 0.78$) and that of the benefit ($Z = -0.27; p = 0.78$). The only difference identified was in the situation of revenge ($Z = -0.35; p = 0.00$), which means that the participants felt that the idol committing revenge is more unjust than a generic character. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the degree of justice when the responses of moral domain ($Z = -0.78; p < 0.4$) and non-moral domain ($Z = -0.11; p = 0.99$) are analyzed in isolation using the Mann-Whitney test. That is, in a broad analysis, admiration for the characters did not affect the adolescents’ judgment.

Finally, as a curiosity, the idols mentioned by the participants will be presented. These names replaced the generic actors. They are: Adore Delano, Ariana Grande, Benito di Paula, Beyoncé, Billie Joe Armstrong, Camila Cabello, Chris Brown, Christian Von, Criolo, Cristiano Ronaldo, Demi Lovato, Ed Sheeran, Ellora Haonne, Elon Musk, Federico Pellegrino, Felipe Neto, Félix Lengyel, Flavia Pavanelli, Frank Sinatra, Frederico Elboni, Ivete Sangalo, J. K. Rowling, J.J. Abrams, JB (GOT7), Júlio Cocito, Justin Bieber, Kai (EXO), Karol Conka, Kevin De Bruyne, Kevin Durant, Kim Nam Joon, Kim Seok Jin, Kurt Cobain, Marília Mendonça, MC GW, Michael Jackson, N (VIXX), Neymar, Oh Sehun (EXO), Paul Mccartney, Post Malone, RM (BTS), Sam Smith, Selena Gomes, Slash, Steven Tyler, Tyler Joseph, and V (BTS). The most indicated names were: Felipe Neto and Oh Sehun, with four quotes, then the tie was between Beyoncé, Camila Cabello and Cristiano Ronaldo with three quotes, and, finally, the names Ariana Grande, Ed Sheeran and Kim Seok Jin were cited only twice. Teenagers’ average admiration for these celebrities was 7.74 (SD = 1.43) on a scale of zero to ten.

When asked about the reason for admiration, only 16 subjects responded with moral reasons related to the justification for the admiration of these idols,
being examples of these justifications: “He helps many people with depression”, “He is a defender of peace” and “She is very kind to people”. On the other hand, the other responses linked the interviewee’s admiration with the characteristics of the celebrity, such as: physical appearance, artistic talent, and identification of the adolescent with the idol or with his or her artistic work (e.g., “He is funny”; “He is beautiful and charming”; “I think she is cool and funny”; “He sings very well and the texts are good”; “Because of his personality”; “I like his style of music, besides identifying with him”).

4 DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the accidental situation was judged differently by the research participants, in relation to kinds of justifications attributed to the degree of justice and the measure of degree of justice itself. Comparing the analysis of justifications about the degree of justice of the four situations, the category of justification “conventional concern” prevailed in situations of hurting psychologically, hurting to obtain benefit and hurting out of revenge, however in the situation in which the hurting was accidental prevailed “concern for the situation”. This result can be explained by a kind of judgment that focuses only on the aspect of the offender’s intention, leaving aside the consequence of the act for the victim. This type of judgment manifested in this situation reveals an uncoordinated judgment which neglects the consequence of hurting and uses non-intention as a justification for even judging the situation as neither just nor unjust.

This kind of non-responsibility for the act in the case of this situation seems to release the offender, even from the conventional penalties for the act as well as from the judgment of social expectation that considers revenge guilty, stealing wrong and ugly, and cursing something that everyone will judge as inappropriate, since these are the most common justifications in the case of the other three situations.

An explication for these results can be given by a kind of uncoordinated judgment. According to the average age group of the participants in our research,
this type of judgment seems to be common in this age group, according to similar results found in a US-study that compared situations of different degrees of moral salience with variations in both context scenarios and related to conflicts based on the interests of the action’s actor (Nucci et al., 2017). When judging such situations, there is a process of non-coordination of the different aspects to be reconciled in the assessment of the situation (Nucci, 2013). For our study, non-intention is justification for not being punished or judged as unjust when hurting another person, and in the case of the mentioned study personal rights overlap when judging a situation of indirect harm to another (Nucci & Turiel, 2009; Nucci et al., 2017).

Among conventional concerns, social expectation was the category that predominated most in the justifications about the events, which makes the results of this article congruent with the other data from the São Paulo SDT. Despite having enjoyed other methodological models and focusing on different objectives, the research by Caetano and collaborators (2019) identified that most of the sample responded to situations of moral nature (taking money from parents without permission, beating a brother, lying to parents and breaking a promise with parents), showing no interest in the other’s suffering. Souza’s research (2019) pointed out that 47% of young people aged 12 to 18 years considered homosexuality to be wrong, based on justifications associated with conventionality (aspects of social and religious expectation).

The survey of the research by Choi and collaborators (2020), in turn, also using the situations of hurting others in the context accidental, psychological, of benefit and revenge, however in children, identified a low percentage of moral justifications. They found that 87.7% of the participants responded with concerns based on social expectation and standardization of behavior towards a specific community.

The US SDT data, however, demonstrate that the situations of hurting the other, in addition to being concrete and not requiring symbolic elaboration by children and adolescents, are more salient events and mostly judged to be of moral domain, since every individual has experienced or seen someone experience something like this (Yoo & Smetana, 2022). By comparing data from these
regions, it can be seen that the US results indicate that both children and adults present relational feedback on the effects caused by the acts of hurting others, judging the situations by the actions present in the context (direct consequence of the action) and not by any external interference (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2013), while the participants in the present study express a contrary concern. It is observed that the adolescents’ justifications divert from the direct understanding of the meaning of the rule “it is forbidden to hurt people” to focus only on the legitimacy of the rules imposed by adults and on obedience to parents (external consequence of the action).

Social experience is one of the main components that influences the development of knowledge domains, which may explain the peculiarities identified in studies in São Paulo. Depending on the inserted social position (e.g., ethnicity, gender, social class, economic condition and sexual orientation), certain people may suffer to a greater degree with the power distribution, with restrictions on freedom of expression and the lack of opportunities available, which significantly interferes with the experience and understanding of the social phenomena that are presented to them (Nucci et al., 1996; Souza, 2019). Hoff and collaborators (2002) identified that the social class influences the knowledge about the social world, since fathers and mothers from more disadvantaged social classes carry out more aggressive disciplines and in greater quantity.

The second explication for the predominance of conventional justifications in the data can be discussed based on the results found in the judgment criteria. According to SDT, for a judgment to be considered moral domain, it needs to meet the criteria of concern for the welfare of the other, safeguard their rights and be based on empathic and just relations (Nucci, 2001; Turiel, 1983). However, in addition, the criteria of mandatory, generalization, universalization and non-contingency to authority need to be present (Killen & Rutland, 2001; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2013). When analyzing these criteria, our study revealed that approximately half of the participants did not present the contingency criterion to the authority in their responses to the four situations about hurting. This kind of blind obedience to authority has been manifesting itself in the results of other studies carried out in Brazil in the same theoretical perspective, demonstrating that
adolescents believe that parental authority is legitimate in events of previous moral, conventional, prudential and even personal domain (Caetano et al., 2019). Children judge house and school rules as mandatory based on justifications focused on obedience to adults and fear of punishment (Caetano & Dell’Agli, 2020), children judge the same situations related to hurting with predominance of conventional justifications focused on obedience to parents (Choi et al., 2020).

Regarding the comparison between the judgments of generic actors and idols, the only situation that suffered an alteration of answers by the replacement of the actor was that of hurting by revenge. The adolescents in the study thought that it was more unjust for an idol to commit any transgression than for a generic character. On the other hand, the children of Choi and collaborators (2020) demonstrated an opposite behavior. They eased the transgressor’s guilt when he or she was a character from the Frozen cartoon that they admired a lot (the character Anna was less guilty than a generic woman for assaulting someone for revenge).

Through a review of the literature by Onu and collaborators (2016), it was realized that admiration can be related to different emotions. Despite not directing the instrument’s methodology to identify the correlated emotions, it was noticed that the adolescents in the sample linked admiration to the increase in admiration for moral attitudes, gratitude and fear, since they presented a certain demand with the attitudes of celebrities (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Keltner & Haidt, 2003). When idols failed to fulfill what was expected by the youths or took actions that were contrary to their principles, participants reported that they would no longer admire them. While in the study with the sample of children, these judged in favor of the character they admired regardless of the actions that such characters would perform, and linked the feeling of admiration with adoration (Choi et al., 2020), thus showing devoted love to an authority listed by the child him or herself (Schindler, Zink, Windrich, & Menninghaus, 2013).

In addition, the hypothesis that there would be a difference of judgment according to the admiration for the action’s actor was denied in three of the four situations by the results obtained. This hypothesis was formulated because of data from Decety and from Cowell (2014) whose studies revealed that the
identification that participants had with certain people changed their judgments. As admiration and identification are related feelings (Onu et al., 2016) it was expected that, by identifying with their idols, the sample participants would tend to be more empathic with them. However, the adolescents in this sample only changed their judgments in the situation of revenge by judging their idols more rigorously for committing transgressions to generic actors.

Finally, it is clear that the majority of teenagers’ idols are international singers and musicians (American and South Korean), although some students also indicate writers, entrepreneurs, athletes and actors as idolized. The explication found in literature about the preference of this type of celebrity is linked to the desire to create a distance to one’s family (Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987). Adolescents resort to music to express their feelings and to distinguish themselves from the social group already mentioned, they prefer to listen to their own types of music in order to feel belonging to their group of friends who have similar musical tastes, getting closer to celebrities by means of fantasy (Raviv et al., 1996).

5 CONCLUSION

Research on the role of admiration in the judgment about hurting has shown that the admiration variable did not interfere with the responses of adolescents. This result is intriguing because other studies on this development stage reveal that adolescents tend to look for models who differ from their parents, with idols being admired in this age group. However, the evaluation object of this article – hurting the other – has a peculiar characteristic. Causing harm to the other is about a prototypical situation of moral dominance and, considered from the SDT perspective, the situation of eminent moral salience (Nucci et al., 2017). Thus, the adolescents judged the situations of hurting the other as wrong and, both from the point of view of generic actors being the protagonists as in the case of idols. The act of hurting the other seemed to have prevalence in the judgment, being considered really wrong, regardless of the author’s definition. In fact, the only difference found by the study in the comparison of judgments between
generic authors and idols showed that adolescents demanded a form of greater “commitment” to the moral domain by idols, hoping that they would be more correct in the judgment about hurting.

On the other hand, although the expectation in relation to any and every idol tends to be that of an appropriate behavior, the idols mentioned are celebrities, sportsmen, singers or actors and are most admired by teenagers for characteristics linked to their physical type, artistic talent or aspects that make them famous. Thus, this fact can also justify the absence of the interference of admiration in the judgments.

In what concerns the few moral answers to the judgment on different situations of hurting, new studies need to be developed to investigate why deference to authority is so prevalent in adolescents’ responses and why there are few responses that demonstrate concern for others. This reveals two limits of the present research: the small number of participants, as well as the need to investigate adolescents’ judgments about the situation of hurting others, regardless of mitigating aspects such as revenge, lack of intention or presence of personal interests. More research is needed to understand how adolescents develop their morality over time and what factors influence this development. Such understanding is fundamental to building a more ethical and fair society, thus informing policies and practices that benefit current and future generations.
REFERENCES


