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Moral Socialization: An Empirical Analysis of the Hogan Model

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Abstract

An alternative social psychological model of moral development, proposed by Robert Hogan, is empirically assessed for the first time. Five character-trait dimensions of moral character (moral knowledge, socialization, empathy, autonomy, and ethical attitudes) were used to predict a measure of rule-breaking behaviour. Results indicate some support for Hogan's model. Suggestions are made for refinements in Hogan's theory and for additional research.

While educators debate the saliency of values clarification and moral education programmes in school curricula, behavioural scientists continue to research a variety of moral development theories (see Lickona, 1976 and DePalma and Foley, 1975 for good collections of these studies).

One approach that is generating some interest is a character-trait theory of moral character and moral development proposed by Robert Hogan (1973, 1975). Hogan hypothesizes that moral behaviour can be explained and moral character can be described using five social and psychological dimensions: moral knowledge, socialization, empathy, autonomy, and moral judgement-ethical attitude. These dimensions are based on five recurring themes found in the moral development writings of philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists and *together* can be used to explain a wide range of moral behaviour, defining important dimensions of character development. According to Hogan, these dimensions are conceptually independent and seem to describe how people differ in their use of rules: 'That is, these concepts are abstract dimensions of individual differences in nomotic (rule-governed) behavior, and as such, they should help to explain moral conduct in any socio-cultural context' (Hogan, 1973, p. 220).

Hogan's formulation, although rooted in the philosophical, sociological, and psychological traditions of moral development, is an attempt, in part, to deal with theoretical and methodological shortcomings in these other perspectives. Unlike many cognitive developmental theories which assume progression through pre-set stages in a stepwise manner and successful mastery of each stage before moving to the next, Hogan's model defines socialization, empathy, and autonomy as occurring at progressively later points in time. When they are reached, qualitative changes in the underlying structure of moral behaviour are assumed to result. However, successful

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transition through the earlier stages is not a pre-requisite for attainment of the later ones (Hogan, 1973).

In addition, the model is an attempt at emphasizing the dialectical aspects of moral development. Hogan (1974) feels that the theories of Freud, Mead, and Piaget use a univariate explanation to account for a complex, multidimensional process thereby overlooking the interrelated but often contradictory aspects of reality.

According to Hogan (1975), personality is a product of role structure and character structure. Role structure is one's public personality which develops in social interaction with peers while character structure depends on the unconscious accommodation a person makes to the expectations of parents and family. It is character structure that facilitates social judgment and cultural cohesion and that can be assessed in terms of the five dimensions.

With its theoretical roots in the major sociological, psychological, and philosophical traditions of moral development and with its important conceptual differences from other theories, Hogan's model holds promise as a heuristically viable alternative for analyzing moral character and moral behaviour.

This paper reports the first cross-validation of the entire model.

Methodology

A self-report questionnaire was completed by 320 college students. Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher in sociology, psychology, education, history, and economics classes. An announcement was made that the study entailed anonymous responses to a variety of social psychological attitudes and behaviours and that participation was voluntary. The final sample is a representative cross-section of undergraduates in a variety of majors and year in college. The sample included 49.4 per cent males, 50.6 per cent females; and 85.3 per cent white, 11.9 per cent black.¹

Independent variables

The five dimensions of moral character structure have been operationalized by Hogan (1973, 1975) as follows:

Moral knowledge. The most difficult of his dimensions to measure, moral knowledge has been assessed using both Scholastic Aptitude Test scores (Hogan, 1973) and IQ test scores (Hogan and Dickstein, 1972). It is defined as the 'number and kind of rules a person can state, but not how he feels about, reasons with, or evaluates them' (Hogan, 1973, p. 220). Since the correlation between existing tests of moral knowledge and tests of intelligence is as strong as the relationship of various intelligence tests with one another (Maller, 1944), in this study, moral knowledge has been measured with SAT scores and college grade-point average (GPA), combined with several items concerning familiarity with drug and shoplifting rules (the behaviours studied in this research). A typical item is: 'Does the penalty for shop-lifting vary with the value of the item taken?' (No).

Socialization. Hogan uses the 54-item Socialization scale of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) developed by Gough (1956). This highly reliable and valid scale measures how well a person has internalized the values, conventions, and rules of his society and sees them as personally binding. Items include: 'I keep out of trouble at all costs', 'As a youngster in school I used to give the teachers a lot of trouble.'

Empathy. Hogan (1969) developed a 64-item scale to measure empathy using questions chosen from the CPI, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), and the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR). Empathy is defined as the ability to put oneself in another's place thereby increasing one's sensitivity to the expectations of others, resulting in social compliance (Greif and Hogan, 1973). Typical items include: 'I always try to consider the other fellow's feelings before I do something', 'As a rule I have little difficulty in putting myself into other people's shoes.'

Autonomy. Originally Hogan used Barron's (1953) measure of independence of judgment, but has since switched to a 48-item autonomy scale developed by Kurtines (1973) from CPI, MMPI, and IPAR tests. Kurtines claims to measure the extent to which an individual's moral actions are governed by his own personal moral code and the implications of that code for others, and not by peer group pressure or the dictates of authority. Typical items include: 'I think I am usually a leader in my group' (true), 'It is pretty easy for people to win arguments with me' (false).

Ethical attitudes. A 35-item Survey of Ethical Attitudes (SEA) has been constructed by Hogan (1970) to measure an individual's ethical stance. A low score reflects a personal conscience or moral intuition orientation (belief in higher laws often unrelated to human legislation and discovered by intuition and reason) while a high score represents a social responsibility or moral positivist orientation (a utilitarian view of laws as means of promoting the general welfare of society) (Hogan, 1973, 1975). The morally mature person would be in the middle of this continuum (see also Nardi and Tsujimoto, 1979). This scale includes 15 weighted continuum attitude items (such as 'A soldier's only moral obligation is to obey orders'), 14 forced-choice questions ('An unjust law: should be obeyed/should be disobeyed'), and two moral dilemmas (one about a choice between maintaining discipline and respecting cultural traditions, the other about the ethics of conveying to police information heard by a psychiatrist during therapy), all from Form A.

Dependent variable

Moral behaviour is defined by Durkheim (1961) as actions following a system of rules and by Hogan (1973, p. 219) as 'actions carried out with regard to the rules that apply in a given social context'. Thus, moral behaviour in this study refers to rule-following or conforming behaviour, while immoral is defined as rule-breaking or deviant behaviour. Involvement in heavy drug and alcohol use and shoplifting behaviour constitutes the breaking of laws set by the larger society. These behaviours represent the dependent variable. Thirty items assessing respondents' involvement with a variety of drug, alcohol, and shoplifting behaviours were developed to measure moral behaviour. They were asked to self-report frequency of involvement along a seven-point scale within the past twelve months.

The questionnaire also included a variety of socio-demographic variables and a social desirability scale developed by Crowne and Marlowe (1964) to control for response bias on the self-report behaviour measure.

Pre-tests

Several pilot tests were conducted before the final questionnaire was distributed.² The first entailed an item analysis to reduce Hogan's three longest scales (socialization, empathy, and autonomy) to more manageable lengths. By means of factor analysis and correlation of items to total score of that scale, reduced forms of these three scales were obtained. The correlations for the reduced scales with the original length scales are: socialization, 0.92; empathy, 0.87; and autonomy, 0.81.

The second pilot study (for details see Nardi, 1976) evolved out of concern with response set bias on self-report questionnaires (Phillips and Clancy, 1972) and included validity and reliability tests of the major illegal behaviour items, using a 'bogus pipeline' paradigm (Jones and Sigall, 1971).

The thirty behaviour items were then factor analyzed. Those items loading highly (0.5 and above) on the first unrotated principal components factor were combined to form a rule-breaking behaviour scale.

Thus the data analysis reported here involves five independent variable scales (the moral character dimensions), three of which are the short form, and a rule-breaking behaviour scale as dependent variable (which includes validated items on drug and alcohol use and shoplifting behaviour).

Table 1: Intercorrelations of the independent and dependent variables for a sample of 320 college students

	<i>Soc</i>	<i>Emp</i>	<i>SEA</i>	<i>MK</i>	<i>RB*</i>
Autonomy	0.083	0.186	0.017	0.055	0.032
Socialization		0.053	0.196	0.014	-0.573
Empathy			-0.154	0.159	0.210
Ethical Attitudes (SEA)				-0.096	-0.416
Moral Knowledge					0.244

* The rule-breaking (RB) correlations are corrected for attenuation.

Results

According to Hogan (1973), the five dimensions of moral character structure are conceptually independent. Low intercorrelations among the scales for this sample of 320 college students support this contention (see Table 1).

However, Hogan's model emphasizes that moral character can be described and moral behaviour can be predicted by means of the *interrelationships* of the five dimensions. For example, high socialization and high empathy in conjunction with autonomy produce moral maturity, low socialization and low empathy in conjunction with autonomy tend to produce 'strong, effective, resolute, unyielding scoundrels'; and low empathy, high socialization combined with autonomy describe a stern patriarchal moralist (Hogan, 1975, p. 163).

Stepwise multiple regression was used to assess the interrelationships among the five dimensions of moral character in predicting rule-breaking behaviour. Table 2 shows that socialization, empathy, and ethical attitudes together account for nearly 20 per cent of the variance in rule-breaking behaviour. Although most of the explained variance is due to the socialization scale, the beta weights are in expected directions (Hogan, 1973, 1975), lending some support to the theory.

This finding was validated when the regression analysis was done while controlling for scores on the social desirability scale. The rule-conforming person can be described, then, as scoring high on socialization, low on empathy, and holding an ethic of social responsibility.

Discussion

Several points should be emphasized in interpreting these results. Some problems exist with the measurement of moral knowledge and autonomy, the two scales with the poorest associations.

At least among a fairly homogeneous college student sample, moral knowledge, when defined by intelligence measures, may not be a suitable dimension. A better test of this factor would

Table 2: Stepwise multiple regression: Hogan's scales and rule-breaking behaviour

	<i>Standardized Coefficient</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>	<i>Unique Variance</i>
Socialization	-0.387	Under 0.001	0.143
Empathy	0.131	0.012	0.017
Ethical Attitudes (SEA)	-0.110	0.036	0.011
	$R^2 = 0.194$	$R = 0.441$	

Partial correlations for variables not entered:

Autonomy	0.032
Moral Knowledge	0.086

involve a sample drawn from a cross-section of the entire population where a larger variation of intelligence can be found. In addition, much needed development and clarification are required for the concept of moral knowledge. This is the weakest dimension conceptualized by Hogan and the most problematic. Serious questions must be raised about the rôle of intelligence and acting morally. If intelligence is meant to be but one component of a moral knowledge dimension, then an elaboration and clarification of the other components must be made before final assessment of this dimension can occur. As Hogan's theory now stands, these other factors are stated, although he himself uses only intelligence measures to assess moral knowledge. Hogan has not clearly resolved this issue in his theoretical writings.

Similar reasonings apply to the autonomy scale. Since the scale is still in the process of being refined and tested by Kurtines, the explanations for its low predictive power could be based in (1) the construction of items to measure adequately the concept of autonomy and (2) the conceptualization of autonomy. For this sample of college students, a low standard deviation and a high score resulted.

According to the developmental model, autonomy emerges in late adolescence/early adulthood as the individual begins to take on career responsibilities. One would expect, a wider range of autonomy scores among these 18- to 22-year-olds since some are just beginning college with vague career goals while others are about to leave with perhaps more concrete career plans. It is at this stage of life that the struggle for autonomy usually is evident. A reason, then, for the high scores may be that the items are not accurately measuring this sense of autonomy, and the concept is being confused with other dimensions, such as independence (i.e., a sense of freedom), that may not be related to moral conduct.

If it is possible that independence is being tapped, then a high restricted range of scores would not be unusual among a group of students living away from home in a liberal environment. But is this the same as saying that the individual, who may feel free and independent, is actually governed by his own personal moral code independent of social pressures and influences? It may be that the concepts of independence and autonomy are being confused.

Perhaps only by testing the instrument on a different sample with a wider age range and living in a variety of environments can this issue be clarified. Until then, it is unclear whether the instrument or the concept of autonomy or both needs reworking.

Interpretation of the regression analysis suggests that it was the socialization scale which contributed the largest percentage of explained variance. Three conclusions can be offered: (1) the Hogan model is not supported statistically, but a tendency to predict in the theorized direction is evident; (2) support can be given only to the power of Gough's socialization scale and Hogan's model must be rejected; or (3) the choice of using rule-breaking as the dependent measure of moral maturity almost exactly relates to the kind of behaviour the socialization scale was designed to predict.

Because of the internal problems with the autonomy and moral knowledge scales and the relatively homogeneous sample, the former conclusion will first be argued. Although socialization is the best predictor, the SEA is a strong dimension and empathy shows some significance. If these dimensions were *not* predicting in theorized directions, then conclusion (2) would be more warranted. But so long as tendencies in expected directions are present, even with the measurement problems, the model cannot now be dismissed.

Furthermore, closer inspection of the model leads one to emphasize the socialization dimension. As the first stage in the development of moral character, it may affect the later emergence of empathy, autonomy, moral knowledge, and ethical attitudes. It would be much more surprising if socialization did not emerge as the strongest dimension.

However, the fact that the socialization scale did predict exceedingly well, overshadowing the next best predictor, may also be taken as evidence of the model's failure. Just as it would be unfair to reject outright Hogan's model, it may also be unfair not to consider the second conclusion seriously. It is entirely possible that Hogan's theory is inaccurate. No model may exist: only a

collection of five independent dimensions, most of them weak measures. The fact that the socialization scale accounted for a large percentage of explained variance may emphasize the weakness of the model: it is no better than an already highly validated and reliable scale. Unless some stronger interrelationships emerge among the dimensions in future research, the model may be judged ineffective.

The choice of using rule-breaking behaviour as a test of the Hogan model is also a limitation. Hogan's conception of moral maturity involves more than following rules; it also includes making judgments about ethical situations where morality conflicts with social norms. Thus, conclusion (3) must be considered as a reasonable explanation for the power of the socialization dimension. Depending on the operationalization of the dependent variable, Hogan's five dimensions may take various combinations. As long as moral maturity is defined in terms of rules and behaviour, socialization will emerge as the most powerful predictor. That the empathy and SEA measures still contribute some unique variance suggests, however, validation of the Hogan paradigm. A complete analysis of Hogan's theory of moral development would account for both facets of his conception of moral maturity (see Tsujimoto and Nardi, 1978).

Conclusions

As the first extensive empirical analysis of Hogan's theory, this research has demonstrated that the model cannot be ruled out as a viable alternative to assessing moral development. What needs to be done is a developmental analysis of the model. If indeed these five dimensions prove to be important in replicated studies, then some analysis of the basic assumptions concerning how they develop is necessary. Hogan's emphasis is on the dialectical, interpersonal relationship between an individual's needs and the demands of his social environment. A valuable study would involve investigation of this dialectical process at different ages in order to determine the individual's reaction and resulting attitudes to rules. Furthermore, support of Hogan's contention that empathy develops during adolescence and autonomy in early adulthood needs to be demonstrated. Under what conditions do they develop and what is their relationship to how individuals use and think about rules?

A difference between Hogan's model and other developmental ones (Kohlberg and Piaget) is not assuming stepwise progression through the stages. In addition, major differences exist in the conceptualization of moral maturity and conduct. A comparative study with these competing theories is necessary to establish these differences and the overall saliency of Hogan's model. Does it predict better and contribute more to our understanding than the other major perspectives and theories in sociology and psychology? Or does it work in conjunction with these other viewpoints enhancing our knowledge about how and why people behave and reason morally? (See Tsujimoto and Nardi, 1978).

Finally, the efficacy of Hogan's theory in moral education programmes needs to be assessed. Moral education has largely been viewed as a matter of stimulating the development of moral judgment to higher stages of reasoning. Since this paper suggests that moral character plays an important role in determining moral conduct, programmes in moral judgment development might be fruitfully integrated with an approach to character development based on Hogan's theory. For example, attempts to raise individuals' levels of empathy could be designed as part of a values clarification programme in schools. Role-taking and role-playing exercises could easily be developed and implemented.

It has been an assumption of this study that these questions and research suggestions can only be answered after an initial assessment into the usefulness of the model had been completed. Thus, as an exploratory study, this research has not demonstrated the failure of the model. The findings seem to suggest some support of the dimensions as predictors of rule-breaking behaviour. The findings also suggest that further elaboration and refinement of the model would not be a worthless effort. Something is being offered here beyond descriptions of who conforms or deviates from rules: namely, a conceptualization of how and why people come to know what is right and wrong

and to act accordingly. This has been the central problem plaguing behavioural scientists interested in moral socialization and behaviour for some time. Additional research with Hogan's formulation may begin to resolve these issues.

Notes

1. Additional data describing the sample in more detail are available upon request.
2. Any data discussed but not shown in the article are available from the author.

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