Happy Victimizing in Emerging Adulthood: Reconstruction of a Developmental Phenomenon?

Eveline Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger[a], Brigitte Latzko[b]

[a] University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

[b] University of Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

This study contributes to a developmental approach focusing on emotions as being of key significance in explaining the Happy Victimizer pattern (HV pattern) among adults. Based on findings from our own research on moral emotions within the Happy Victimizer paradigm, we claim that a purely cognitive approach to explain the HV is overly narrow. Instead, we argue that emotion attributions serve as a source for moral motivation. By identifying new dimensions (i.e., deontic judgment; own action choice; self-constructed emotion attributions) to explain the complexity of moral functioning in emerging adulthood, the current study contributes to a theoretical and methodological framework that integrates both cognitive and emotional processes to bridge the gap between moral thought, emotion, and action with the aim of fostering moral learning across the lifespan.

Keywords: Happy Victimizer Phenomenon; adult moral development; moral emotions; developmentally appropriate assessment

---

1. Introduction

The Happy Victimizer Phenomenon (HVP[1]) denotes the empirical finding that children aged four to seven ascribe positive emotions like satisfaction or happiness to a rule transgressor although they know that a moral rule was broken (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992; Arsenio & Lover, 1995; Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988; Nunner-Winkler, 1999, 2012). In contrast, older children ascribe negative emotions like guilt or shame to the rule transgressor. The classical explanation according to Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988) states that moral cognitions (making and justifying judgments) develop earlier than moral emotions. The attribution of positive emotions to a rule transgressor is interpreted as indicating a lack of moral motivation (Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988), the lack of moral motivation representing a lack of readiness to act on moral commitments (Thorkildsen, 2013). Based on the assumption that moral emotions like guilt can be seen as showing that the self not only knows a moral rule, but also feels committed to it (Gibbard, 2002; Malti, 2010; Malti, Gummerum, Keller, & Buchmann, 2009), the HVP can also be interpreted as a lack of moral commitment accompanying the absence of negative (i.e., moral) emotion attributions. Owing to the well-established finding that by age eight or nine a shift towards negative emotion attributions can be observed, the HVP is also understood as representing a developmental transition, with the attribution of positive emotions being replaced by the attribution of negative emotions in the course of moral development (Arsenio et al., 2006; Lagattuta, 2005; Krettenauer, Malti, & Sokol, 2008). According to this understanding, the HVP is restricted to pre- and early school age.

Findings from recent studies, however, challenge this position, as identical reasoning patterns (i.e., judging a transgression as wrong while attributing positive emotions to the transgressor) can be found for adolescents and adults as well (e.g., Heinrichs, Minnameier, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, & Latzko, 2015; Krettenauer, Asendorpf, & Nunner-Winkler, 2013; Krettenauer & Eichler, 2006; Nunner-Winkler, 2007). Therefore, the question arises how the occurrence of these reasoning patterns in adolescence and adulthood[2] can be explained. Researchers have offered different explanations for the occurrence of the HV pattern in adolescence and adulthood. Heinrichs and colleagues (2015) for example argue that specific factors of a given moral conflict and its associated context might influence individuals' respective evaluation (situation-specifity). Minnameier and Schmidt (2013) conceptualise the HV pattern in adolescence and adulthood as a particular moral judgment structure triggered by situation-specific factors and used by individuals to adjust to the requirements of the situation (adjustment-focused). From a perspective of the development of moral emotions, we raise the question whether the classical interpretation of the HV as a lack of moral motivation (Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988; Nunner-Winkler, 2007; 2013a) also applies to adolescence and adulthood.

A second issue to be resolved is whether the HVP actually does disappear in the course of development. This is a relevant question: If the HVP represents a developmental transition (e.g., Krettenauer et al., 2008) which is experienced by all children (i.e., a normative transition), then we need longitudinal research to indicate whether adults showing the HV pattern are displaying delayed or even dysfunctional moral development. First longitudinal findings have not yielded a clear picture (Krettenauer et al., 2013). However, the basic question whether the judgment-emotion-attribution-justification patterns found in adults really represent the HVP (as documented for children) can already be approached by cross-sectional research. The aim of our study is to investigate whether the HVP or similar judgment-emotion attribution-justification patterns can be found in adults, and if so, how these patterns might be explained. More specifically, the question is whether the explanation used with children, that is, a lack moral motivation, also applies to adults. To address these aims, we also need to consider measurement issues related to the age-sensitive assessment of moral rule knowledge and moral emotions.

---

[1] We use HVP as an abbreviation to refer to the Happy Victimizer Phenomenon.
[2] We use the term emerging adulthood to refer to our own sample and refer to adolescence, adulthood, and young adulthood when using the terminology of the research cited.
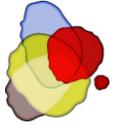
1.1 Assessing the Happy Victimizer Phenomenon in Childhood

In the classical study by Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988), the HVP as such was studied systematically for the first time, although the term "Happy Victimizer" was not yet used. The authors sought to replicate and extend findings from a previous study by Barden, Zelko, Duncan and Masters (1980) who had observed that children aged four to five ascribed mainly positive emotions (mostly happiness) to a protagonist whose theft passed undetected, whereas children aged nine to ten and twelve to thirteen attributed negative emotions, especially fear and sadness. Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988) sought to more deeply investigate children's understanding of moral emotions: "If the developmental trend observed by Barden et al. (1980) is a stable phenomenon, this may point to an important change in children's conceptions of the determinants of emotion between the preschool and the elementary school years" (Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988, p. 1324). They devised and implemented a series of three experiments to pursue this issue.

The first experiment served as a test of the generality of the expected emotion attribution patterns and was intended also to offer first explanations for these patterns. Children aged 4, 6 and 8 were given two emotion attribution and one moral judgment task, all of them including pictures so assist children's understanding. The emotion attribution tasks included two parallel stories about a protagonist taking or not taking sweets or chestnuts from another child in that child's absence (the term "stealing" was not used). Each story was therefore available in a moral (not taking) and an immoral version (taking the sweets/chestnuts). Counterbalancing was used in that children were presented only one version of each story, that is, either the moral version of the first and the immoral version of the second story, or vice versa. For each story, children were first told that the protagonist considered taking the sweets/chestnuts and then asked whether the protagonist was allowed to do so. This question was used to control for children's rule understanding, namely, whether they knew that one is not allowed to take another's belongings. Afterwards, they were asked to tell how the protagonist felt. Although the experimenter did not ask children to justify their emotion attributions, most of them did so. Accordingly, justifications were included in analyses. In the subsequent moral judgment task, children were told a story about two children, each of whom had stolen a toy car from a friend. The experimenter asked whether it was right for them to have taken the car or not, and why. Then, pictures of both protagonists were shown, with one having a happy face (because s/he now has the beautiful car) and the other having a sad face (because s/he is sorry for taking the car). Children were then asked whether the happy or the sad child was worse, or whether both were the same and asked to justify their judgment.

In the second experiment, the potential influence of the salience of morality in a given context on children's emotion attributions was addressed in a sample of children aged 4 to 5. Salience of morality was manipulated along the dimensions of (a) tangibility of profit of an immoral action (achieving possession of a desired object vs. managing to annoy another child); and (b) severity of transgression (telling a lie in story 1 vs. physically harming another child in story 2). Story 1 (telling a lie) was acted out using two puppets. Story 2 (harming) was narrated and accompanied by coloured drawings. Half of the children were assigned to the tangible- and non-tangible profit conditions, respectively, and stories were told in counterbalanced order. Understanding of the story was checked directly after introducing the rule transgression. After each story, first the test question ("What do you think? How does [protagonist] feel now?" "Why?") and then the control question tapping rule understanding ("What do you think about what [protagonist] did: Was it right or was it not right?" "Why?") were asked. After finishing both stories children were asked whether the protagonist who sent another in the wrong direction or the protagonist who pushed another child from the swing was worse or whether they were both the same.

Experiment 3 investigated whether the attribution of positive emotions to a wrongdoer was limited to instances of intentional harm in a sample of 4-to-5-year-olds. Four contrasting conditions were defined: intentional harm by ill-motivated actor; unintentional harm by ill-motivated actor; unintentional harm by neutrally motivated actor; and bystander witnessing someone being hurt. The harm done always referred to physical injury in the context of children playing together. Four story

frames were constructed, and each frame was used to create four stories representing the four contrasting conditions. Movable coloured figures were used to enact the stories. Each child was presented four different stories, one for each of the experimental conditions (including counterbalancing and randomisation of story frames and experimental conditions, respectively). After each story, first emotion attributions ("What do you think? How does [protagonist] feel now?" "Why?") and then moral judgments ("Was [protagonist] bad or was she [he] not bad?" "Why?") were elicited. If emotions were not attributed spontaneously, the experimenter asked: "Do you think [protagonist] is happy or do you think [protagonist] is sad?" "Why?". After eliciting emotion attributions and moral judgments, a control question referring to intentionality of harm was asked: "Did [protagonist] hurt [victim] intentionally or did he [she] hurt him [her] not intentionally?". For the bystander condition, the control question was: "Did [protagonist] hurt [victim] or did he [she] watch [victim] being hurt?"

To sum up, slightly different methods (stimulus materials, nature and functions of the questions asked, and sequence of the questions) were used in each experiment. In experiment 1, moral emotion attributions and moral judgment were assessed separately. In the emotion attribution task (coming before the moral judgment task) children's moral rule understanding was determined before eliciting emotion attributions. In experiment 2, children's emotion attributions were elicited before determining their moral rule understanding. Moral judgment was assessed last, after finishing the two stories involved, but not in a separate task. In experiment 3, children's emotion attributions were elicited before moral judgments. Again, the latter were not assessed in a separate task. Also, control questions were used for intentionality or bystander perspective. Especially the nature and function as well as the sequence of the questions used pose a challenge when it comes to deconstructing the HV. Interestingly, Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988) never used the term "Happy Victimizer" for the phenomenon they explored but mentioned a "happy wrongdoer"[3].

In subsequent research, a more standardised assessment procedure was developed, leading to the following prototype: presenting the story; assessment of rule understanding; introducing the transgression; asking for a moral judgment and its justification; and eliciting the attribution of an emotion to the perpetrator and the justification of that emotion. Variations included for example asking control questions ensuring understanding of the story (e.g., Gasser & Keller, 2009), probing for deserved punishment (e.g., Smetana, Toth, Cicchetti, Bruce, Kane, & Daddis, 1999), severity of transgression (e.g., Smetana et al., 1999), evaluation of interpersonal consequences (e.g., Malti & Keller, 2009), rule- and authority independence (e.g., Malti, Gasser, & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2010), or including the perspective of self-as-perpetrator in addition to other-as-perpetrator (e.g., Keller, Lourenço, Malti, & Saalbach, 2003). Often, following Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988), additional materials like pictures (e.g., Keller, 2006), cartoons (e.g., Malti & Keller, 2009) or figurines and dolls (e.g., Woolgar, Steele, Steele, Yabsley, & Fonagy, 2001) were used to illustrate or even enact the story vignettes and support children's understanding. For further discussions of methodological variations see for example Krettenauer, Malti and Sokol (2008).

Some variation can also be found for the assessment of moral judgments and emotion attributions in particular. With respect to morally judging the transgression (sometimes also termed understanding of rule validity to emphasise the necessity of knowing a rule and its validity before being able to judge its transgression as wrong), various, slightly differing probes were used, like for example "Is it right what X (victimizer) did? Why/why not?" (e.g., Keller et al., 2003; Malti et al., 2009); "Is it right to do what the victimizer did? Why/why not?" (Malti & Keller, 2009); "Is it right or wrong to do X? Why?" (e.g., Gasser & Keller, 2009); or "Is it okay or not okay for the child to do x? Why? ". Action choice and its moral evaluation were used in one out of four vignettes in the study by Malti & Keller (2009): "How does the protagonist decide in this situation? Why?" "Is this the right decision or not? Why?" Thus, whereas Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988) used the concept of "being allowed", other researchers focused also on the "rightness" of an act, the dichotomies of "right vs. wrong" or "okay vs. not okay", or, very rarely, asked for an action decision and its justification.

---

[3] It seems that Arsenio & Kramer (1992) were the first to use this term.

With respect to eliciting emotion attributions (also called emotion expectancies to specify that emotions attributed represent what children expect others to feel in a given situation), again, slightly differing probes were utilised. Regarding attributing emotions to the transgressor, probes like "How does X (victimizer) feel at the end of the story? Why does s/he feel this way?" (e.g., Keller et al., 2003); "How does the victimizer feel? Why?" (e.g., Malti & Keller, 2009); or "How do you think this child will feel after s/he (X)es?" Why? (Malti et al., 2010) were used. When attributing emotions to the self as transgressor, probes included "How would you feel if you had done that? Why would you feel that way?" (e.g., Malti et al., 2009) or "How would you feel if you did X? 'Why would you feel that way?" (e.g., Gasser & Keller, 2009). In some studies, attribution of victims' emotions was also elicited (e.g., Gasser, Malti, & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2012) using simple probes like "How does the victim feel? (Why?)". Sometimes, children could freely attribute emotions (e.g., Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, Gasser, & Malti, 2010), whereas in some studies they were either presented with response scales including a variety of emotions (e.g., Gasser et al., 2012) or depicting gradations between "good" and "bad" (in some cases accompanied by schematically drawn faces, e.g., in the study by Arsenio & Kramer, 1992). To sum up, while Nunner-Winkler and Sodian used a general probe about the way the protagonist feels, introduced by "What do you think…?", other researchers used also more direct probes not stressing participants' thinking, specifications of the point in time (at the end of the story, after s/he Xes) or – in the case of self-as-perpetrator – formulations including conditionals ("would"), sometimes including also pre-defined response scales.

1.2 Reconstruction of the Phenomenon in Adulthood

As indicated above there is no doubt that Happy Victimizer patterns can be found in adolescents and adults. A large part of the studies addressing the HV either in adolescence or adulthood from a developmental psychological perspective have focused on its relationship with antisocial or aggressive behaviour (for a review see Malti & Krettenauer, 2013). Empirical findings indicating that immoral conduct (e.g. breaking rules, aggressive behaviour) is, in part, related to a lack of moral emotions (Malti & Krettenauer, 2013) underline the assumption that moral emotions have a great impact on regulating social interaction. Moral emotions are considered to be the key elements of socio-emotional competences, because they help children and adolescents (and even adults) to anticipate the outcomes of socio-moral events and adjust their social interaction accordingly (Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, 2006; Malti, 2010). Within this context moral emotions have the power to regulate social interaction in the sense of providing the motivation to do the good and avoid doing the bad (Kroll & Egan 2004). Therefore, investigating the HV, particularly the question how moral emotions impact adolescents' and adults' social behaviour is of great significance in explaining the causes of adaptive and maladaptive behaviour. Krettenauer et al. (2013) reported a significant relationship between moral emotion attributions at the ages of 18 and 23 with antisocial conduct at age 23. Additionally, they found that moral emotion attributions at the ages of 18 and 23 predicted antisocial conduct at age 23, both directly and indirectly. A study by Perren and Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger (2012) showed that moral emotion attributions (a lack of remorse) predicted both traditional and cyberbullying in adolescents aged 12-19. Moreover, a vast body of research on moral disengagement in children, adolescents and adults has consistently shown that the selective activation of moral distancing processes enables individuals to feel indifference and even happiness when harming others' welfare (for an overview, see Bandura, 2016). Finally, a set of studies on cheater's high indicated that although individuals predicted that they would feel guilty and experience increased negative affect after acting unethically, those individuals who actually did cheat consistently experienced more positive feelings than those who did not (Ruedy, Moore, Gino, & Schweitzer, 2013).

However, two major issues are still unresolved, one of them of a conceptual and one of them of a methodological nature. First, conceptually, most of these studies have used the HV as an explanatory variable, shedding light on the role moral motivation (to be exact: emotion attributions) plays in explaining negative behaviour in children and youth. Only few studies have investigated the HV in adolescence or adulthood as a phenomenon in its own right (Nunner-Winkler, 2007; Minnameier, 2012)

and sought to explain it. Accordingly, the question why HV patterns can be found in children, adolescents, and adults still remains unresolved, as remains also the question whether the childhood phenomenon is identical with the HV patterns occurring in later life. A purely cognitive-structural explanation, postulating that the HVP can be reconstructed as a specific moral judgment structure, that is, level 2B reasoning (cf. Minnameier, 2012; Minnameier & Schmidt, 2013), is not sufficient and falls short because both the phenomenon and its explanation are assessed on the basis of one and the same judgment-emotion attribution-justification pattern. More precisely, the pattern is used both to "diagnose" the HVP and to identify the respective moral judgment structure, leading to circular reasoning. Presently we do not know whether the specific moral judgment structure (2B) can also be found in persons not displaying the HVP. Only if the judgment structure cannot be found in persons not displaying the HVP can we conclude that this specific structure is found only within the HVP and might thus offer a potential explanation thereof.

Both the transitional and the dysfunctional hypotheses, however, are in line with the assumption that developmental changes in moral motivation cannot be explained solely as caused by changes in moral judgment (Krettenauer & Montada, 2005). Instead, moral rule knowledge and self-evaluating moral emotions are increasingly coordinated (Krettenauer & Montada, 2005). According to Blasi (1993, 1999) and Damon and Hart (1988) these processes are based on the development of a moral self or a moral identity, respectively. One's moral identity shows itself to the extent that moral notions, such as being fair, just, and good are important to one's self-understanding (Blasi, 1984). Or, conversely, when the self is not constructed or defined with reference to moral categories and shows no commitment to moral values, one does not have a moral identity (see Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004, p.192). Taken together this position points towards a "weak" moral self as a further explanation supporting the dysfunctional hypothesis (cf. Krettenauer, 2012) and raises the question whether HV is associated with a lower commitment to moral values.

A second issue relates to the measurement of HV across different age groups. We have to keep in mind that investigating a developmental phenomenon necessitates the implementation of developmentally appropriate, that is, sensitive, assessment methods. To learn more about the HV across different age groups, we must ensure that we adequately measure the underlying moral mechanisms. Only then can we ascertain whether the phenomenon (as a judgment-emotion attribution-justification pattern) actually can be found in adults, that is, in analogy to findings for children. Thus, we have to analyse the conceptual foundations of the phenomenon as well as its assessment across the various age groups.

Accordingly, we will first analyse the HVP, that is, dissect it into its constituent parts on the basis of the measurement method used in the original studies on children. This will enable us to critically discuss existing findings on the HV pattern in adults. Afterwards, we will transfer the operationalisation of the individual components as used for investigating children to adulthood, that is, develop an operationalisation of these components that represents a developmentally appropriate assessment suited to study the phenomenon in adults. This new measurement approach will then be used to investigate a) whether and how the phenomenon (judging a transgression as wrong while attributing positive emotions to the transgressor) manifests itself in young adults, addressing the reconstruction of the phenomenon; and b) whether the moral reasoning structures found actually represent the HVP or whether they reproduce a specific judgment-emotion attribution-justification pattern which resembles the HVP on the surface but means something different on the conceptual level. The core research questions we pursue are: What patterns of moral judgments, emotion attributions, and associated justifications do we find in young adults? Can the HVP be reconstructed for adults on the basis of our findings?

Additionally, we wanted to explore the potential relationship between participants' patterns of moral judgments, emotion attributions, and associated justifications and their commitment to moral values. We hypothesised that participants displaying HV reasoning patterns would show a lower level of commitment to moral values than participants not displaying HV reasoning patterns.
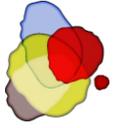
2. Method

2.1 Participants

285 pre-service teachers enrolled in a teacher education programme at the University of Leipzig (Germany) participated in the study. Participants' age ranged from 19 to 40 years (M_{age}=21,74, SD=2.59), with 98.2% of the sample being 29 years or younger. 69% of participants were female. This corresponds well with the overall gender balance of the German pre-service-teacher-population. 60% of participants were enrolled in a Secondary I programme, whereas 40% attended a Special Needs Education Programme focusing on socio-emotional development. Most of the students studied Humanities (21%) and Languages (25%), only a few studied subjects related to Natural Sciences (5%). Study participation took place in the context of a lecture on developmental psychology and was voluntary and anonymous.

2.2 Instruments and Procedure

Following Krettenauer and Eichler's (2006) argumentation relating to a potential social desirability bias in adolescents' and emerging adults' responses in an individual interview setting, we decided to provide a half-standardised paper-and-pencil questionnaire to provide a more anonymous setting in which participants feel free to share their (written) reflections about rule transgressions and the emotions involved with the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: In the first part, participants were asked to work through two vignettes, each reflecting a moral norm conflicting with personal desires in order to assess their moral judgements, emotion attributions, and their respective justifications. In the second part, participants' moral values were assessed. In the third part, participants provided some general sociodemographic information.

2.2.1 Moral Judgments, Emotion Attributions, and Justifications

In line with the traditional Happy Victimizer Paradigm three vignettes describing the following moral rule transgressions were used: Keeping excess change money (10 Euros) after buying a new bicycle light (Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger & Perren, 2015; 2016) (this vignette was called the "Change Money" vignette; see also study 2 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, Latzko, Minnameier, & Döring, this issue); breaking one's promise to wait for a prior customer while selling the motorbike to someone offering a better price (see Döbert & Nunner-Winkler, 1983; see also study 1 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al., this issue) (this vignette was called the "The Motorbike" vignette); lying to a potential customer to prevent him/her from employing another company (Minnameier & Schmidt, 2013) (this vignette was called the "Lying to a Customer" vignette). The "Change Money" vignette involved a passive moral temptation, where a protagonist has no intention to transgress and only realises that s/he might do so as a result of specific circumstances (Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger & Perren, 2015; 2016; Heinrichs, Minnameier, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, & Latzko, 2015), while the other scenarios involved proactive transgressions. Each participant worked through a combination of two vignettes. The combinations were as follows: Change Money-The Motorbike, Lying to a Customer-Change Money, The Motorbike-Lying to a Customer. Female participants received a female version (Jana, Maria, Petra) whereas male participants received corresponding male versions (Jan, Mark, Peter). The order of vignettes per combination was counterbalanced. The English version of the vignettes can be found in the appendix.

To provide developmentally appropriate assessment of adults' moral competencies in the context of the vignettes, we used an extended measurement approach regarding moral rule understanding and moral emotions. Moral rule understanding was not only assessed by asking participants to judge the transgression, but, to gain insights into participants' initial construction of the situation, by asking them to make a deontic judgment and to justify it. To give more room to potential complexity and richness of emotion attributions, participants had to indicate first whether they ascribed positive, negative, or mixed

(i.e., both positive and negative) emotions to the protagonist and then to specify (i.e., construct) the emotion(s) attributed and justify them.

The exact procedure was as follows: For each vignette, participants were first asked to make a *deontic judgment*: They had to indicate what the protagonist should do by ticking the appropriate box (transgress, not transgress) and to justify their judgment. For example, in the "Change Money" vignette, they had to indicate whether Jana should keep the money or give it back, and write down the reason for doing so in their own words. Afterwards, the vignette was continued by saying that the protagonist had transgressed the moral rule. In the "Change Money" vignette, this was expressed as follows: "Let us suppose that Jana kept the money". Participants then had to *judge the rule transgression* (classical Happy Victimizer judgment): They indicated whether the behaviour was "wrong" or "right" by marking the appropriate answer; afterwards, they had to tick one out of three boxes marked "good", "bad", and "mixed" to indicate how the protagonist felt after the transgression. Additionally, they were asked to specify the exact emotion(s) in their own words and to write in their own words why the protagonist felt that way. Finally, participants had to make a *self-judgment*. They had to indicate what they themselves would do in the given situation, that is, transgress or not transgress, by ticking the appropriate box (e.g., keep or give back the money); justify this decision in their own words; attribute emotions to themselves by ticking "good", bad", or "mixed"; specify the exact emotion(s) in their own words; and justify the emotion attribution(s) in their own words.

2.2.2 Moral Values

The second part of the questionnaire assessed the values participants were committed to by using the *Ideal Self Values* scale (Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Alisat, 2003). The scale includes the following twelve values: "Polite and courteous", "trustworthy", "good citizen", "honest/truthful", "ambitious/hard-working", "be open and communicate", "careful/cautious", "independent", "kind and caring", "fair and just", "loyal", "integrity". Six of these values belong explicitly to the moral domain ("trustworthy", "good citizen", "honest/truthful", "kind and caring", "fair and just", "integrity" and represent a general index of commitment to a moral valuing self (Campbell, 2004; Pratt et al., 2003). Participants had to indicate how important the twelve values were for their own life on a 6-point-likert-scale (0=unimportant; 6=important). Afterwards, they had to pick and range the three most important values.

2.3 Analyses

Emotion attributions included both a general attribution (good, mixed, bad) as well as an emotion specification (i.e., construction of the respective emotion/s) and related justification of the emotion specification. Emotion specifications were categorised separately from justifications. If specifications of "good" or "bad" included more than one emotion, the most concrete and/or most complex was used, following the classification of emotions according to Harris (2008). An example for "bad" was "tense, anxious, unwell". In this case, anxiety was used because it was the most concrete emotion. An example for "good" was "good, proud". Here, pride was coded because pride was both the most concrete and the most complex emotion. An overview of positive and negative emotion specifications categorised according to their complexity is given in the results section (see also Tables 5 and 6).

In line with study 2 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al. (this issue), justifications of judgments and emotion attributions were content analysed using categories from research within the Happy Victimizer Paradigm. As no new inductive categories were found for the Change Money vignette in relation to the categories identified in study 2 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al. (this issue), the existing categories were summarised into the following category groups: morality (i.e., referring to moral principles), empathy towards the victim, consideration of consequences, law and order, hedonism, blaming the victim, and affective distancing (i.e., stating that the protagonists' emotions cannot be inferred). Inter-rater reliability including two independent raters (10% of scenarios) was high

(percentage of perfect agreement = 96.8 %, *Cohen's kappa κ* = .81). Inter-rater reliability for emotion specifications was perfect (percentage of perfect agreement = 100%; *Cohen's kappa κ* = 1.0).

Data from the *Ideal Self Values* scale were analysed for internal consistency. For both the moral (6 items) and the non-moral (6 items) subscales, *Cronbach's Alpha* was calculated. Both subscales had only moderate internal consistency (.50 for the moral and .47 for the nonmoral subscales, respectively). Accordingly, the six moral values were used as single-item measures of the respective values.

3. Results

In order to reconstruct the Happy Victimizer Phenomenon, we combined its basic and constitutive elements in a step-by-step procedure. In a first step, to refer back to the original HVP, we included only data from the Classical Happy Victimizer condition referring to the evaluation of the rule transgression. Accordingly, we identified participants who judged the transgression as wrong while attributing positive or mixed emotions to the perpetrator. Table 1 shows the distribution of participants across the categories of "pure Happy Victimizer", "mixed Happy Victimizer" (attributing mixed emotions) and "no Happy Victimizer" for the first vignette. (To include all participants the distribution is shown across all vignettes given in the first situation.)

As can be seen, almost no one judged the respective transgression as wrong while attributing purely positive emotions (2.2%), indicating that we found only very few participants displaying the pure Happy Victimizer. However, almost half of participants judged the transgression as wrong and attributed mixed, that is, positive and negative emotions (42.5%).

Table 1

Distribution of Participants in the Classical Happy Victimizer Condition Across Vignettes for the First Vignette Presented

	Classical HVP: Transgression Not Okay & Positive Emotion (n=280)	
	f	*%*
Pure HV	5	2.2
Mixed HV (also negative emotions)	119	42.5
No HV (all other cases)	156	55.7

If we break this down for the individual vignettes, we see that the distribution of participants across the three HV categories differs, with the "Lying to a Customer" vignette having the highest number of participants belonging in the no HV category (Table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of Participants in the Classical Happy Victimizer Condition Across Situations 1 and 2 for Each Vignette

	Change Money (n=187)		The Motorbike (n=184)		Lying to a Customer (n=184)	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Pure HV	8	4.3	8	4.3	3	1.6
Mixed HV	75	40.1	90	48.9	49	26.6
No HV (all other cases)	104	55.6	86	46.7	132	71.7

Additionally, we took a closer look at the data from the 104 participants categorised as no HV in the Classical Victimizer condition[4] in the "Change Money" vignette. 50 (48.1%) of those (104) participants actually said that it was *okay* for Jana to keep the money. 14 participants attributed positive, 3 attributed negative, and the remaining 33 attributed mixed emotions. Similar distributions were found for the no HV category the "The Motorbike" and the "Lying to a Customer" vignette

Table 3

Adding the Deontic Judgment to the Classical Happy Victimizer Condition Across Vignettes for Situation 1

	Classical HV: Transgression Not Okay & Positive Emotion(s)(n=280)		Deontic HV: Rule Should Not Be Transgressed (n=279)	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*
Pure HV	5	1.8	6	2.2
Mixed HV (also negative emotions)	119	42.5	180	64.5
No HV (all other cases)	156	55.7	93	33.3

In a second step, we added the data from the Deontic Judgment condition to see what the distribution of HV patterns as displayed in Table 1 would look like. This meant that we now considered whether participants had also spontaneously said in the deontic judgment that the protagonist should not transgress (i.e., give back the money in the "Change Money" vignette), representing a more appropriate assessment of moral rule understanding in adults. Thus, in the "pure HV" category we now had those participants who had initially (deontic judgment) said that the protagonist should not transgress and who afterwards – when the transgression had been introduced[5] – said that the transgression was not okay but had attributed positive emotions to the protagonist who had transgressed. Only 2.2% of participants actually belonged in that category. However, the "mixed HV" category increased, with 64.5% of

---

[4] In the present paper, the term "condition" refers to the specific form of assessment. For example, the Deontic Judgment condition refers to the assessment of the deontic judgment.
[5] Participants had to make a deontic judgment before the transgression was introduced and afterwards had to judge the transgression.

participants initially saying that the protagonist should not transgress and who afterwards judged the transgression as wrong but still attributed mixed (i.e., positive and negative) emotions to the protagonist. The "no HV" category, accordingly, had shrunk to 33.3% (see Table 3). A *Chi Square* test revealed a significant change of the distribution of the different HV patterns ("pure", "mixed", "no") by judgment condition, that is, Classical vs. Deontic, $\chi^2_{(4,279)} = 317.38$, $p > .001$.

In a third step, we focused on the justifications participants gave for the positive emotions they attributed to the perpetrator in the classical HV condition. Due to the vignette-effect reported above, we decided to perform these in-depth analyses for individual vignettes. We selected the "Change Money" vignette because the situation depicted there (getting too much change) was closest to participants' everyday life-experience.

Table 4

Justifications of Positive Emotions in the Change Money Vignette for the Pure and Mixed HV Categories

	Pure HV		Mixed HV		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Hedonism	-		59	85,6	59	80.9
Morality[a]	2	50	4	5.8	6	8.2
Blaming the victim	-		4	5.8	4	5.4
Empathy towards the victim[a]	2	50	1	1.4	3	4.1
Affective distancing	-		1	1.4	1	1.4
Law and order	-		-		-	
Consideration of consequences	-		-		-	

[a]These instances were formulated in the negative, for example, having no empathy for the victim.

According to the classical findings by Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988), positive emotions should be justified by hedonistic reasons. As most participants attributing positive emotions actually attributed *mixed* emotions, that is, *positive and negative emotions* (see above), we again included both participants showing the "pure" and participants showing the "mixed" HV pattern. Hedonistic reasons were the predominant category used to justify positive emotions (80.9%; see table 4). Still, most of the other justification categories were also used in this vignette, though rather infrequently.
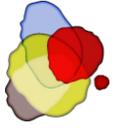
Table 5

Specification and Justification of Emotion Attribution "good"

ID	Response Selected	Specification and Justification of Emotion
(190)	good	hard to say, she is happy having ten Euros, but she has had a bad conscience spending them
(275)	good	not her fault, her own advantage counts for more than the shop assistant's stupidity
(2)	good	she feels comfortable, she did nothing wrong.

The analysis of the specifications and justifications of positive emotions in the "Change Money" vignette for the pure and mixed HV categories revealed that one and the same emotion attributed, that is "good", assumed different meanings. To illustrate this finding, three different specifications and justifications of the response category "good" are shown in Table 5. Thus, "good" meant happiness in response 190 whereas in 275 it expresses the rejection of any concern for the shop assistant. In response 2, "good" assumed the meaning of "feeling comfortable".

To find out whether the various specifications of "good" represented different levels of emotional complexity, we summarised and categorised them on the basis of Harris' (2008) taxonomy of emotions (see also Pons, Harris, & de Rosnay, 2004) (see Table 6). There is agreement among experts that emotions run at different levels of complexity, for example basic/primary, secondary, and tertiary level emotions (Parrott, 2001). All seven levels of complexity were found, with the majority of specifications covering levels 1 and 2, the lowest two levels of complexity.

Table 6

Emotion Specification of the Emotion Attribution "good"

Complexity	Emotion Category	Example	f (%)
1	good (unspecific)	good, good feeling, no bad feeling, great	81 (52.3)
2	happiness	joyful, happy, feelings of happiness	65 (41.9)
3	pride	proud	4 (2.6)
4	hope	hope	1 (0.7)
5	satisfaction	satisfied	1 (0.7)
6	relief	relieved, at ease	2 (1.3)
7	ambition	ambition	1 (0.7)
8	honesty	honest	-

The same analysis was performed for negative emotions. Table 7 displays the summarised emotion specifications for "bad" categorised according to Harris (2008).

Here, seven out of ten levels of complexity were covered. While a large part of specifications covered the lowest three levels, a substantial portion (32.9%) ranged on level six referring to bad conscience and guilt, indicating more complexity and differentiation for specifications of "bad".

Table 7

Emotion Specification of the Emotion Attribution "bad"

Complexity	Emotion Category	Example	f (%)
1	bad (unspecific)	bad, bad feelings, uncomfortable	79 (48.2)
2	negative tension	stress, under pressure, tension, nervous, apprehensive	10 (6.1)
3	anxiety	worry, anxiety, uncertainty	13 (7.9)
4	sadness	sadness, oppressed, sorrow	1 (0.6)
5	helplessness	helpless, overwhelmed	-
6	bad conscience	bad conscience, conscience, guilt	54 (32.9)
7	moral (other)	dishonest, egoistic, reproaches herself, mean	-
8	disappointment	disappointed at herself	2 (1.2)
9	pity	pity	-
10	shame	shame, feeling ashamed	5 (3.05)

In a fourth and last step we explored the potential relationship between participants' HV status assessed in the Classical HV condition in the "Change Money" vignette and the moral values they identified as relevant to themselves. Due to the low internal consistency of the moral subscale, separate univariate *ANOVAs* were performed for each item (value), that is, the degree to which that value was considered important to the self (0=unimportant to 6=important). As cell size was <5 for several cells, the HV categorisation was collapsed into no HV and HV. Only for honest/truthful was a significant difference found: Participants categorised as HV ascribed more importance of honest/truthful to themselves than participants categorised as No HV (μ_{HV}=5.17, SD_{HV}=.89; n=47; μ_{NoHV}=4.58, SD_{NoHV}=1.25, n=98; F[1,98=6.94, p=.01, Eta^2=.07].

4. Discussion

The present study had two aims. First, we wanted to investigate whether the Happy Victimizer Phenomenon can be found in emerging adults, and if so, whether the explanation used with children, that is, a lack moral motivation, also applies to emerging adults. To achieve this, we reconstructed the HV in a step-by-step analytic procedure based on written data from 285 pre-service teachers working through a set of hypothetical vignettes. As our second aim, we wanted to explore the potential relationship between participants' patterns of moral judgments, emotion attributions, and associated justifications and their commitment to moral values.

Our stepwise reconstruction of the HV using a developmentally appropriate measurement approach in our sample of emerging adults yielded a number of noteworthy findings. Results from our *first step* indicated that in vignette 1 in the Classical HV condition virtually no one (2.2% of participants) judged the transgression as wrong while attributing positive emotions to the perpetrator (i.e., displayed the classical HV reasoning pattern). Thus, the *classical HV phenomenon* hardly ever emerged in our emerging adult sample. However, two fifths were identified as falling into the "mixed" HV category, attributing both positive and negative emotions to the perpetrator while judging the transgression as wrong, confirming earlier findings involving adult samples (Heinrichs et al., 2015). Hence, this result implies that the classical HV phenomenon can only insufficiently be used to characterise (emerging) adults' moral functioning in the context of hypothetical vignettes. Still, the relatively high percentage of response patterns falling into the mixed HV category indicates that the Happy Victimizer research paradigm is relevant for the study of moral functioning in emerging adulthood. However, it is necessary to use a measurement approach going beyond the classical assessment procedure to capture the potential complexities of (emerging) adults' moral functioning. This point will be elaborated on in more detail in the subsequent sections.

Analysing the distribution of patterns in the individual vignettes we found that, while the classical HV pattern was low for all three vignettes, the proportion of participants showing the mixed HV pattern differed across vignettes. It seems that the specific vignette contexts contributed to the interpretation of the respective rule transgressions in the situations depicted. There is substantial earlier research showing that both the situations and contexts involved and the specific moral principles underlying hypothetical vignettes influence the way they are interpreted and judged (cf. Nunner-Winkler, 2013b). In this regard, our results also confirm earlier findings on the context and situation specifity of moral judgments (Krettenauer & Johnston, 2011). Additionally, analyses indicated that for all three vignettes about half of those participants falling into the "no HV" group said that it was *okay for the perpetrator to transgress*, for example, to keep the change money in the "Change Money" vignette. Within the Classical HV Paradigm involving (young) children this would be seen as indicating insufficient rule knowledge or rule understanding (e.g., Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988). In a sample of emerging adults, it would be absurd to think that this is actually the case. Moreover, participants said that the rule should be transgressed, for example, that Jana should keep the money, in the Deontic Judgment condition which came before the transgression was introduced in the Classical HV condition. Similar findings, that is, participants saying that it is okay for the perpetrator to transgress were reported by Heinrichs et al. (2015) and by Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al. (this issue) for studies 2, 3, and 4. In the case of study 2, the sample consisted of 14-year-olds, indicating that such transgression-friendly judgments can already be found in adolescence. That these transgression-friendly judgments were found also in the Deontic Judgment and in the Self Judgment conditions in studies 2, 3, and 4 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al. (this issue) further indicates that we cannot assume that this result is due to a methodological artefact relating to the use of the Classical HV condition, where a transgression is stated as "fait accompli".

Results from our *second step* show that, across vignettes, when more deeply examining emerging adult participants' rule knowledge by adding the judgment made in the Deontic Judgment condition, the proportion of participants identified as belonging in the mixed HV category significantly increased, whereas the no HV category shrank. No change was found for the "pure" HV category. Thus, in the

"mixed" HV category we now had participants initially saying that the protagonist *should not transgress* and who afterwards judged the transgression as *wrong* but still attributed mixed (i.e., positive and negative) emotions to the protagonist. Accordingly, we can say that insufficient rule knowledge or rule understanding very probably does not lie at the heart of the "pure" and "mixed" HV reasoning patterns.

The third analytical step, addressing the justifications participants gave for the positive emotions they attributed to the perpetrator in the classical HV condition in the "Change Money" vignette, yielded that participants in the "pure" and "mixed" HV categories predominantly mentioned hedonistic reasons. This is in line with the classical finding by Nunner-Winkler & Sodian (1988) as well as subsequent research. Nevertheless, in almost 20% of the cases additional justification categories emerged, indicating that in our emerging adult sample the classical pattern of positive emotion attributions as justified by hedonistic reasons is not the only pattern included in participants' constructions. It seems that those participants' socio-moral meaning making moved beyond the classical pattern, suggesting that they were able to construct alternative interpretations why a protagonist feels good after breaking a moral rule.

Of course, the nature of the vignette may have played a vital role in stimulating these interpretations. In the "Change Money" vignette, no pro-active, planned rule transgression occurs, no negative duty is violated. Instead, the protagonist is thrown into the situation, that is, tempted not to give back some money s/he mistakenly receives. This is reflected in the responses of participants classified as displaying one of the HV patterns in the Classical HV Condition. For example, ID 275 argued that Jana feels good about keeping the money "because it is not her fault, her own advantage counts for more than the shop assistant's stupidity". Justifications as these reflect specific strategies of moral disengagement (cf. Bandura, 2016) which make it possible for an individual to feel good after breaking a moral rule by cognitive reconstruction of the situation: The behaviour or its consequences are reconstructed as less harmful, the individual's responsibility is denied or weakened, or the victim is blamed or denigrated (e.g., Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2015a).

Further, when analysing specifications and justifications of positive (good") and negative ("bad") emotion selections, we found that a broad range of meanings was associated with those specifications. For example, "good" could mean happiness, feeling unconcerned, or feeling comfortable. This differentiation of meanings was further confirmed when we categorised the specifications according to complexity after Harris (2008). In the case of positive emotions, all seven levels of complexity were found, with the vast majority of specifications (94.2%) covering the lowest two levels. A different picture emerged for negative emotions. While almost all levels were used (eight out of ten), and while the majority of specifications belonged to the lowest three levels (59.2%), still 39.4% of specifications related to guilt and mention of a bad conscience, the sixth level of complexity. It seems that for negative emotions, guilty feelings are both salient and relevant in participants' constructions of the situation. Thus, the "Change Money" vignette, despite its context of a passive moral temptation (no intention to transgress) and its relation to a positive duty (which has a weaker moral appeal than negative duties, e.g., Belliotti, 1981; see study 2 in Heinrichs, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al., this issue), still triggers also guilty feelings in participants' evaluation of the transgression. On the methodological level, our results suggest that it is important to have (emerging adult) participants construct (specify) their emotion attributions, instead of offering a pre-selection without asking for any specification, in order to more closely examine their moral functioning.

Moreover, emerging adults' use of also more complex levels of emotions going along with the use of justifications other than hedonism provides evidence that emerging adults' moral meaning-making is differentiated, complex, and in some cases even sophisticated. This can be seen as an indication of complex reasoning processes taking place when emerging adults evaluated this hypothetical moral vignette. And although the results of their reasoning find expression in written form only, still these written answers are sufficient to reflect the processual nature of participants' responding. Thus, what might look similar for children and emerging adults when considering the surface (judging the transgression as wrong while attributing positive emotions) carries differential depths of understanding. Accordingly, while the HV framework is still relevant in studying emerging adults'

moral functioning, our results indicate that the patterns found mean something different from the phenomenon as identified in young children. Consequently, we vote for using different terms in order to mark this developmentally relevant difference. We suggest to reserve the term "Happy Victimizer Phenomenon" to studies with preschool and young schoolchildren. Based on the findings in this study as well as those from study 2 in Heinrichs, Gutwziller-Helfenfinger et al. (this issue) using a similar measurement approach we suggest to use the term "Happy Victimizer Pattern".

The second aim of our study was to explore the potential relationship between participants' patterns of moral judgments, emotion attributions, and associated justifications and their commitment to moral values, the latter representing a moral self. Here, results were modest. The poor measurement properties of *the Ideal Values Scale* (Pratt et al., 2003) as determined from our data did not make it possible to create a moral subscale. It is possible that effects of culture may have influenced the interpretation of these items, as the scale was developed in a US context while we used them in a sample of German pre-service teachers. This calls for a validation of the scale for the European and more specifically, for the German context. Accordingly, analyses could only be performed on the level of individual items. From the six moral items, only the item "honest/truthful" yielded a significant effect: Participants categorised as displaying HV patterns (mixed or pure) saw this value as more important for their own than those categorised as no HV. However, collapsing HV categories due to the small cell size of the pure HV category is not really satisfactory, because the two categories carry different meanings. In the pure category, only positive emotions were attributed, whereas participants in the mixed category attributed also negative emotions, reflecting their inner struggle to make meaning of the situation. That those participants displaying HV patterns assigned more personal relevance to honesty/truthfulness implies that there is a discrepancy between the abstract importance they assign to this value and the concrete evaluation of a situation where this value becomes relevant. It is possible that – due to the more open nature of the passive moral temptation, these participants were not sufficiently aware that the situation was morally relevant, and that an orientation towards honesty/truthfulness might guide the interpretation of the situation by attributing guilty feelings (i.e., negative emotions) to the rule transgressor. Hence, this would raise the issue of moral sensitivity (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma, 1999) and its relation to a moral self (Blasi, 1993). In any case, our findings underline the claim by Krettenauer et al. (2008) arguing that it is necessary to explore the link between moral emotions expectancies and the development of the moral self empirically. It is probable that moral emotion expectancies are intimately linked to the development of the moral self. To our knowledge, hardly any empirical research has analysed this relationship directly (e.g., see Krettenauer, Campbell, & Hertz, 2013), so the ideas presented here remain largely theoretical.

To sum up, our findings suggest that moral emotions play an important role in emerging adults' evaluations of morally relevant situations and moral rule transgressions. By identifying new dimensions (i.e., deontic judgment; own action choice; self-constructed emotion attributions) to explain the complexity of moral functioning in emerging adulthood the current studies contribute to a theoretical (and methodological framework) that integrates both cognitive and emotional processes to bridge the gap between moral thought, emotion, and action (Malti & Latzko, 2010). Second, our results imply that also in emerging adulthood emotions play a central role when it comes to explaining the complexity of moral functioning. A purely cognitive-structural approach as suggested by Minnameier (e.g., 2012) is not sufficient to explain our findings. Very basically, even if the pattern of judging the transgression as wrong while attributing positive emotions is constructed as reflecting a specific substage of moral judgment and thus seen as basically a cognitive phenomenon, the occurrence of mixed emotions and the associated mixed HV pattern cannot be grasped by this approach. The construction or attribution of also negative emotions, together with positive emotions, is not envisaged there. Finally, we cannot say that emerging adults displayed the classical HV phenomenon, which in itself would be an indicator that either the developmental transition had not been made or that participants would display a dysfunctional morality. However, many of them showed complex mixed HV reasoning patterns, at least in the context of passive moral temptations, suggesting that emerging adults' moral functioning often includes internal struggles and ambivalence when thinking about moral issues. We need more research, also longitudinal, to explore the morality of emerging adults and potential developmental trajectories across adulthood.

4.1 Limitations and Outlook

There are several limitations to our study. First, we used self-report data to assess participants' moral functioning. Especially regarding the Ideal Self Values Scale, it is possible that, despite the anonymous setting, participants' answers may have been influenced by social desirability. However, participants' answers in the hypothetical vignettes included many socially undesirable instances relating to the breach of moral rules in connection with showing no indications of guilt. Yet for further studies it would be important to include a measure of social desirability to rule out this possibility and thereby strengthen the internal validity of our measurement. Second, including a convenience sample of pre-service teachers implies that we can generalise our findings only to a certain extent. Although our results confirm earlier findings, still the data were collected in a rather homogeneous, well-educated university sample. Accordingly, at this point we cannot say whether the HV patterns can also be found in the general population of (German) emerging adults. For future studies, we need to include more diverse samples and also assess other relevant personal characteristics like for example socio-economic status, level of education, or migration background in order to more deeply explore (emerging) adult moral functioning and potential mediating or moderating factors. This also means that it is necessary to include further potentially relevant variables associated with moral functioning like empathy, social perspective-taking, moral sensitivity, or interpersonal problem solving. Moreover, we need to use also behavioural measures, for example in the context of experimental settings (Malti & Latzko, 2017) to bridge the gap between moral functioning in hypothetical contexts and actual moral behaviour.

Our findings have practical implications relating to moral learning and development. By using passive moral temptations, we stimulated participants to explore the boundaries of morality, that is, situations where right and wrong are not as clear-cut as for example in situations where a negative duty like stealing, lying, etc. is violated. This resulted in a surprisingly high proportion of participants showing mixed HV reasoning patterns, indicating that our scenarios stimulated participants to think more deeply about the issues raised in the vignettes. Accordingly, such materials may be well suited for use with children, adolescents, and emerging adults to stimulate their moral growth. In line with the Kohlbergian tradition, we state that it is not the direction of a moral judgment or evaluation per se but the reasoning process which both reflects and stimulates moral growth. We assume that when it comes to the important and often neglected issue of vertical moral development (cf. Schuster, 2001), that is, learning to transfer moral principles and reasoning to other domains, contexts, and situations, scenarios including passive moral temptations may be especially fruitful. Thus, while we do not offer a «plus one» stimulation in the Vygotskyan sense (Blatt & Kohlberg, 2006) that is, a stimulation based on a higher developmental level, we argue that passive moral temptations may offer a «plus horizon», that is, a vertical, horizon-extending stimulation. As everyday moral situations involve a high level of variation, for example lying to a stranger vs. lying to a friend or stealing out of hunger vs. stealing just for fun, it is important that individuals of all ages are offered multiple opportunities to practice their reasoning skills in a variety of educational settings. These may include well-established approaches like conflict discussions, role-play, creative writing, and so on. The important issue is that shades and gradations of meaning can be explored, reflected upon, and experienced (cf. Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2015b).
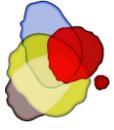
Keypoints

- A clear distinction needs to be made between the Happy Victimizer *Phenomenon* as relating to young children's, and the Happy Victimizer *Pattern* as relating to emerging adults' (and adolescents') moral functioning, respectively. Despite some similarities on the surface level, the respective reasoning (i.e., judgment-justification-emotion attribution-justification) patterns are developmentally distinct.

- Exploring the link between moral emotion attributions and the commitment to moral values is a promising pathway for further research on (adult) moral functioning.

- The assessment of (emerging) adults' moral reasoning tapping both cognitive and emotional components necessitates the use of developmentally appropriate or sensitive assessment approaches.

- Our findings emphasise the situation specify of moral emotion attributions.

- Further research is needed to explore the potential of educating moral emotions

References

Arsenio, W. F., Gold, J., & Adams, E. (2006). Children's conceptions and displays for moral emotions. In M. Killen & J. G. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 581–609). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Arsenio, W. F., & Kramer, R. (1992). Victimizers and their victims: Children's Conceptions of the Mixed Emotional Consequences of Moral Transgressions. *Child Development, 63*(4), 915–927. doi: 10.2307/1131243

Arsenio, W. F., & Lover, A. (1995). Children's conceptions of sociomoral affect: Happy victimizers, mixed emotions, and other expectancies. In M. Killen & D. Hart (Eds.), *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives* (pp. 87–128). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barden, C. R., Zelko, F. A., Duncan, W. S., & Masters, J. C. (1980). Children's consensual knowledge about the experiential determinants of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(5), 968–976. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.39.5.968

Blasi, A. (1984). Moral identity: Its role in moral functioning. In W. Kurtines, & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), Morality, *moral behavior and moral development* (pp. 128 –139). New York: Wiley.

Blasi, A. (1993). The development of identity: Some implications for moral functioning. In G. G. Noam & T. E. Wren (Eds.), *The moral self* (pp. 99 – 122). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blasi, A. (1999). Emotions and moral motivation. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 29*(1), 1-19. doi:10.1111/1468-5914.00088

Bandura, A. (2016). *Moral disengagement: how people do harm and live with themselves*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Blatt, M. & Kohlberg, L. (2006). The Effects of Classroom Moral Discussion upon Children's Level of Moral Judgment. *Journal of Moral Education, 4*(2), 129-161. doi: 10.1080/0305724750040207

Campbell, K. M. (2004). *Moral identity, youth engagement, and discussions with parents and peers*. St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada: Brock University.

Damon, W., & Hart, D. (1988). *Self-understanding in childhood and adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Döbert, R. & Nunner-Winkler, G. (1983). Moralisches Urteilsniveau und Verlässlichkeit. Die Familie als Lernumwelt für kognitive und motivationale Aspekte des moralischen Bewusstseins in der Adoleszenz. In G. Lind, H.H. Hartmann, & R. Wakenhut (Hrsg.), *Moralisches Urteil und soziale Umwelt* [Moral judgment and social environment] (S. 95-122). Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Verlag.

Gasser, L., & Keller, M. (2009). Are the competent the morally good? Perspective taking and moral motivation of children involved in bullying. *Social Development, 18*, 798–816. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00516.x

Gasser, L., Malti, T., & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2012) Aggressive and nonaggressive children's moral judgments and moral emotion attributions in situations involving retaliation and unprovoked aggression. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 173*(4), 417-439. doi: 10.1080/00221325.2011.614650

Gibbard, A. (2002). Normative and Recognitional Concepts. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 64*(1), 151-167. doi: 10.1111/j.1933-1592.2002.tb00148.x

Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2015a). Moral disengagement and aggression. Comments on the Special Issue. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly, 61*(1), 192-211. doi: 10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.61.1.0192

Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2015b). Die Wirkung von erweitertem Rollenspiel auf soziale Perspektivenübernahme und antisoziales Verhalten. In T. Malti, & S. Perren (Hrsg), *Soziale Kompetenz bei Kindern und Jugendlichen* [Social competence in children and adolescents] (S. 244-261; 2. überarb. und erw. Aufl.). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E., & Perren, S. (2015). Adolescents' evaluations of passive moral temptations – relations to bully-victim problems. Paper presented in the symposium *Morality and Bully-Victim Problems* (Chairs: L. Kollérova & D. Strohmeier). 17th European Conference on Developmental Psychology (ECDP), Braga (Portugal), September 8-12, 2015.

Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E., & Perren, S. (2016). The relationship between adolescents' bully-victim problems and their use of mechanisms of moral disengagement in the context of passive moral temptations. Paper presented in the symposium *Moral disengagement in the production of aggression* (Chairs: K. Runions & E. Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger). 22nd World Meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA), Sydney (Australia), July 19-23, 2016.

Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E., Gasser, L., & Malti, T. (2010). Moral emotions and moral judgments in children's narratives: Comparing real-life and hypothetical transgressions. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 129,* 11–31. doi: 10.1002/cd.273

Harris, P.L. (2008). Children's understanding of emotions. In M. Lewis, J. Haviland-Jones, & L. F. Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (3rd ed., pp. 320-331). New York: The Guilford Press.

Heinrichs, K., Minnameier, G., Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E., & Latzko, B. (2015). „Don't worry, be happy?" Das Happy-Victimizer-Phänomen im berufs- und wirtschaftspädagogischen Kontext. *Zeitschrift Für Berufs-Und Wirtschaftspädagogik, 111*(1), 31–55.

Keller, I. (2006). *Moralische Motivation bei achtjährigen Kindern. Zusammenhänge von moralischer Motivation mit Sozialverhalten und der Beliebtheit unter Gleichaltrigen* (Forschungsbericht Nr. 3 aus der Reihe z-proso). Zürich: Pädagogisches Institut der Universität Zürich.

Keller, M., Lourenço, O., Malti, T., & Saalbach, H. (2003). The multifaceted phenomenon of 'happy victimizers': A cross-cultural comparison of moral emotions. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 21*, 1–18. doi: 10.1348/026151003321164582

Krettenauer, T. (2012). Linking moral emotion attributions with behavior: Why "(un)happy victimizers" and "(un)happy moralists" act the way they feel. *New Directions for Youth Development, 136*, 59-74. doi: 10.1002/yd

Krettenauer, T., Asendorpf, J. B., & Nunner-Winkler, G. (2013). Moral emotion attributions and personality traits as long-term predictors of antisocial conduct in early adulthood: Findings from a 20-year longitudinal study. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 37*, 192–201. doi: 10.1177/0165025412472409

Krettenauer, T., Campbell, S., & Hertz, S. (2013). Moral emotions and the development of the moral self in childhood. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 10*(2), 159-173. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2012.762750

Krettenauer, T., & Eichler, D. (2006). Adolescents' self-attributed emotions following a moral transgression: Relations with delinquency, confidence in moral judgment, and age. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 24*, 489–506. doi: 10.1348/026151005X50825

Krettenauer, T. & Johnston, (2011). Positively versus negatively charged moral emotion expectancies in adolescence: The role of situational context and the developing moral self. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology 29*(3), 475-488. doi: 10.1348/026151010X508083

Krettenauer, T., Malti, T., & Sokol, B. (2008). The development of moral emotion expectancies and the happy victimizer phenomenon: A critical review of theory and application. *European Journal of Developmental Science, 2*, 221–235. doi: 10.3233/DEV-2008-2303

Krettenauer, T. & Montada, L. (2005). Entwicklung von Moral und Verantwortlichkeit. In J. B. Asendorpf (Hrsg.), *Soziale, emotionale und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung* [Social, emotional, and personality development] (S. 141-189). Göttingen: Hogrefe.

Kroll, J., & Egan, E. (2004). Psychiatry, moral worry, and the moral emotions. *Journal of Psychiatric Practice, 10*(6), 352-360. doi: 10.1097/00131746-200411000-00003

Lagattuta, K. H. (2005). When you shouldn't do what you want to do: Young children's understanding of desires, rules, and emotions. *Child Development, 76*(3), 713–733. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2005.00873.x

Lapsley, D. K., & Narvaez, D. (2004). A social-cognitive approach to the moral personality. In, D. K. Lapsley & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral development, self and identity* (pp. 189 - 212). Mahwah, N. J.: Erlbaum.

Malti, T., Gasser, L., & Buchmann, M. (2009). Aggressive and prosocial children's emotion attributions and moral reasoning. *Aggressive Behavior, 35*, 90–102. doi: 10.1002/ab.20289

Malti, T., Gasser, L., & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2010). Children's interpretive understanding, moral judgments, and emotion attributions: relations to social behaviour. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 28*, 275–292. doi: 10.1348/026151009X403838

Malti, T., & Keller, M. (2009). The relation of elementary-school children's externalizing behaviour to emotion attributions, evaluations of consequences, and moral reasoning. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 6*(5), 592–614.

Malti, T., Keller, M., Gummerum, M., & Buchmann, M. (2009). Children's moral motivation, sympathy, and prosocial behavior. *Child Development, 80*(2), 442–460.

Malti, T., & Krettenauer, T. (2013). The relation of moral emotion attributions to prosocial and antisocial behavior: A meta-analysis. *Child Development, 84*(2), 397–412. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01851.x

Malti, T., & Latzko, B. (2010). Children's moral emotions and moral cognition: Towards an integrative perspective. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 129*, 1-10.

Malti, T., & Latzko, B. (2017). Moral emotions. In J. Stein (Ed.), *Reference module on neuroscience and biobehavioral psychology*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-809324-5.06491-9

Minnameier, G. (2012). A cognitive approach to the 'happy victimiser'. *Journal of Moral Education, 41*, 491-508. doi: 10.1080/03057240.2012.700893

Minnameier, G., & Schmidt, S. (2013). Situational moral adjustment and the happy victimizer. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 10*, 253-268. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2013.765797

Nunner-Winkler, G. (2007). Development of moral motivation from childhood to early adulthood. *Journal of Moral Education, 36*(4), 399–414. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240701687970

Nunner-Winkler, G. (2013a). Moralische Entwicklung. In M. Stamm & D. Edelmann (Eds.), *Handbuch frühkindliche Bildungsforschung* [Handbook of early childhood educational research] (pp. 653–665). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-19066-2

Nunner-Winkler, G. (2013b). Moral motivation and the Happy Victimizer Phenomenon. In K. Heinrichs, F. Oser & T. Lovat (Eds.), *Handbook of moral motivation. Theories, models, applications* (pp. 267-288). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Nunner-Winkler, G., & Sodian, B. (1988). Children's understanding of moral emotions. *Child Development*, *59*(5), 1323–1338. doi: 10.2307/1130495

Parrott, W. (2001). *Emotions in Social Psychology*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Perren, S., & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2012). Cyberbullying and traditional bullying in adolescence: Differential roles of moral disengagement, moral emotions, and moral values. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 9*(2), 195-209. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2011.643168

Pons, F., Harris, P.L., & de Rosnay (2004). Emotion comprehension between 3 and 11 years: developmental periods and hierarchical organization. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 1*(2), 127–152. doi: 10.1080/17405620344000022

Pratt, M. W., Hunsberger, B., Pancer, S. M., & Alisat, S. (2003). A longitudinal analysis of personal values socialization: Correlates of a moral self-ideal in late adolescence. *Social Development, 12*, 563–585. doi:10.1111/1467-9507.00249

Ruedy, N. E., Moore, C., Gino, F., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2013). The cheater's high: The unexpected affective benefits of unethical behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *105*(4), 531.

Schuster, P. (2001). Von der Theorie zur Praxis – Wege zur unterrichtspraktischen Umsetzung des Ansatzes von Kohlberg, In W. Edelstein, F. Oser and P. Schuster, Eds., *Moralische Erziehung in der Schule. Entwicklungspsychologie und pädagogische Praxi*s [Moral development in school. Developmental psychology and educational practice] (pp. 177-212). Weinheim und Basel:Beltz.

Smetana, J. G., Toth, S. L., Cicchetti, D., Bruce, J., Kane, P., & Daddis, C. (1999). Maltreated and nonmaltreated preschoolers' conceptions of hypothetical and actual moral transgressions. *Developmental Psychology, 35*, 269-281. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.35.1.269

Thorkildsen, T. A. (2013). Motivation as the readiness to act on moral commitments. In K. Heinrichs, F. Oser & T. Lovat (Eds.), *Handbook of moral motivation. Theories, models, applications* (pp. 83-96). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Woolgar, M., Steele, H., Steele, M., Yabsley, S., & Fonagy, P. (2001). Children's play narrative responses to hypothetical dilemmas and their awareness of moral emotions. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *19*(1), 115-128.

Appendix

Hypothetical Scenarios Used

Change Money

Jana uses her bike every day to go to school. She urgently needs a new tail light. She buys a suitable tail light in a bike shop nearby. She chooses one that costs 32.- Euros. Jana pays cash with a 50-Euro bill and, when leaving the shop, notices that the shop assistant gave her 10.- Euros too much in change.

What should Jana do (keep the money / return the money)?

Why? Please justify your choice.

Suppose Jana keeps the money. Is it okay for Jana to keep the money (okay / not okay)?

How does she feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name Jana's feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.

What would you do in this situation (keep the money / return the money)?

How would you feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name your feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.

The Motorbike

Peter offers his motorbike for sale. He wants to sell it for 800.- Euros. A young man is interested in the bike. He beats Peter down to 700.- Euros. The two men come to an agreement. However, the young man does not have enough cash on him. But he promises to be back with the money in half an hour. Peter says: "Agreed, I will wait for you." A short time afterwards, though, another customer joins Peter. He is prepared to pay the 800.- Euros in cash right on the spot.

What should Peter do (sell the motorbike to the new customer / wait for the first customer)?

Why? Please justify your choice.

Suppose Peter sells the motorbike to the new customer. Is it okay for Peter to sell the motorbike to the new customer (okay / not okay)?

How does he feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name Peter's feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.

What would you do in this situation (sell the motorbike to the new customer / wait for the first customer)?

How would you feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name your feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.

Lying to a Customer

Maria has founded an enterprise in an innovative technology sector. The enterprise is in a critical start-up phase. Maria struggles with financial straits and a fluctuating order situation. She has just overcome a slack season. Now the business is running smoothly again. She receives an order that needs to be processed at very short notice. Maria knows already that she will not be able to meet the deadline and will have to stave off the customer. Moreover, when attending a start-up workshop, she happened to learn about a rival company that would be able to process the order both more speedily and reliably. She

ponders whether to inform the customer about the rival company or whether to keep the order in her company.

What should Maria do (inform the customer / not inform the customer)?

Why? Please justify your choice.

Suppose Maria does not inform the customer. Is it okay for Maria not to inform the customer (okay / not okay)?

How does she feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name Maria's feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.

What would you do in this situation (inform the customer / not inform the customer)?

How would you feel (good / mixed feelings [both good and bad], bad)?

Please name your feelings precisely. Please justify your assessment.