

Abstract

The present study examined children's conceptual knowledge of two types of lie, black lies and the white lies, and their actual lying behaviors. A temptation resistance paradigm and four moral assessment stories were conducted to address the assumption that Hong Kong Chinese children (3-5 years old) would have an increasing conceptual understanding of the two lie types. As age increased, children were more inclined to lie and had an increasing correct identification of lies, negative evaluation for both types of lie and ability of moral reasoning. No relationship was found between children's concepts of lies and actual lying behaviors. Children may fail to translate their conceptual knowledge into action. Cultural factors, cognitive ability of children and socialization of parents as potential moderators of these findings are discussed.