Children's Conceptions of Trust in the Context of Social Expectations

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Children's conceptions of trust were examined within the context of social expectations. Sixty children (30 girls, 30 boys) from the first, third, and fifth grades participated in the study. Assessments were made of children's evaluations and corresponding justifications of stories that depicted violations of three social expectations between friends: They involved deception, emotional support, and conventional dress. Judgments of the effects of the violations on friendships were also made. The results showed, across age groups, that children's conceptions of trust drew on moral reasoning; resulted, after a violation, in feelings of being let down, if not betrayed; excluded social-conventional expectations; and included differentiations between contingent and noncontingent obligations. With increasing age, children, across all three social expectations, gave importance to reciprocity in their friendship relations.

Trust plays an important role in a range of social relations. Yet, conceptually, trust has been a difficult concept to define substantively. In perhaps its most undifferentiated use, *trust* means to expect confidently or with assurance (see any standard dictionary). Here, no distinction is made between social and physical expectations. Thus, as we trust friends to keep promises, so do we trust the sun to rise in the morning. In contrast, Baier (1986), in one of the few examinations of trust in the philosophical literature, proposes that trust be differentiated from mere reliance on things, and be conceived of as a social expectation within some minimal moral context.

Of the little research that has been directed toward children's conceptions of trust, definitions have largely corresponded with that proposed by Baier. In particular, social expectations within two types of moral contexts have been investigated. The first type focuses on moral issues of fairness and human welfare. For instance, Rotter

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(1967, p. 65) defined *trust* as "a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on." Such notions of promise keeping and contract are essentially connected to concepts of morality (see also Rotenberg [1980]; and in the philosophical literature, Bok [1978]; Dworkin [1978]; Gewirth [1978]).

The second type of social expectation, while including at least a minimal moral reference to fairness or human welfare, emphasizes interpersonal issues, which often hinge on the contingent nature of the relationship (Selman, 1980; Selman, Jaquette, & Lavin, 1977). For instance, trusting a friend to keep a personal secret (Selman, 1980), although potentially embodying some variation of a moral contract, entails a specific type of interpersonal relationship—presumably one of an intimate nature—that would engender the sharing of the secret to begin with.

Whereas certain interpersonal expectations contain at least a minimal moral reference to fairness and human welfare (as occurs in sharing secrets), not all interpersonal expectations necessarily contain a moral reference. This distinction can be seen in the context of research on children's conceptions of friendship. Generally, it is maintained that friendships give rise to or contain trust (Rubin, 1980), or, less stringently, that in their friendship expectations, children, with increasing age, give importance to helping, commitment, and intimacy (Bigelow, 1977; Bigelow & LaGaipa, 1980; Furman & Bierman, 1984). These friendship expectations clearly entail knowledge about the psychological orientations of others (Selman, 1980; Shantz, 1975; Wellman, 1985). However, it remains unclear what they entail in terms of a moral orientation because each of these friendship expectations can conceivably exist in both moral and nonmoral contexts. For instance, helping a friend who is physically hurt (moral) is different from helping a friend bake a cake (nonmoral); or a commitment to a friend's psychological welfare (moral) is different from a commitment to a friend's involvement in a hobby (nonmoral).

This study represents an initial effort to gain clarity on children's conceptions of trust through an examination of those components previously identified: social expectations within moral contexts. To provide a conceptual and methodological framework, we drew on research on conceptual domains (e.g., Nucci, 1981; Nucci & Nucci, 1982; Smetana, 1982, 1983; Smetana, Bridgeman, & Turiel, 1983; Turiel, 1978, 1983). Two domains (systems of thought that structure social knowledge) have been identified and supported with a wide range of studies: the moral and conventional. In brief, the moral domain has been defined as prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare; and the conventional domain as concepts of systems of social organization (e.g., customs). In addition, some support exists for a third domain that centers around concepts of persons or psychological systems. It was believed that by drawing on this body of research, the present study could utilize, when appropriate, categories and definitional criteria to clarify the boundaries between different types of social expectations which, in turn, could inform an understanding of trust.

We examined conceptions of social expectations in three contexts. For each context, children were presented with a situation depicting a violation of a social expectation. One situation involved lying to a friend for selfish gain, establishing a context for justice and welfare. The second situation involved failure to provide emotional comfort to a friend in favor of a personal activity. This situation, while carrying with it notions of psychological welfare, focuses on the interpersonal relationship (which may entail psychological concepts) that would establish an expectation to provide support. Given that social expectations within both these moral contexts are widely viewed as central to trust, they provided appropriate stimuli for this investigation. The third situation involved unconventional behavior in a shared activity. This situation provided a basis for comparison with social expectations entailing moral components. It may be that such conventional expectations are considered nonbinding among friends (which would exclude them from trust considerations). It may also be that such expectations take on a moral imperative by virtue of their role in the mutuality of close friendship relations.

Three issues were examined within each situation. The first was children's evaluations of each violation and their modes of reasoning for those evaluations. The second issue dealt with the conceived role of the social expectation in maintaining and reestablishing friendship. Following a proposal by Allen (1981, p. 197) to examine friendship in terms of varying degrees of intimacy, two levels of intimacy were used: close and casual friends. The goal was to ascertain ways in which social expectations might differ for different types of friends. The third issue dealt with children's perceived emotional reactions to friends who violate social expectations.

METHOD

Subjects

Sixty children participated in the study. There were 20 children (equal numbers of girls and boys) in each of three age groups: 6- to 7-

year-olds (M = 7 years, 1 month); 8- to 9-year-olds (M = 8 years, 11 months); and 10- to 11-year-olds (M = 11 years, 0 months). The children were selected from two schools in middle- and working-class neighborhoods.

Procedures and Measures

Children were individually administered a standard set of questions about three stories depicting violations of social expectations between friends. Each story presented a hypothetical situation in which the subject was depicted as playing the role of a protagonist whose expectation was violated (put in the form of, for example, "Let's suppose that your best friend . . .").

One story entailed deception. It depicted a child telling a friend that she (or "he" for boys) left her lunch at home and, by this means, gets the friend to share her lunch. Later in the day, the protagonist learns that the other child actually had her lunch, and had said she left it at home to get more food. Thus this story violates an expectation of honesty: that in the context of sharing, friends will tell each other the truth.

A second story described a failure to provide companionship and emotional support. It depicted a child who, because she was feeling sad, goes over to a friend's house to play. The protagonist knows her friend likes to watch television this particular day, but asks if they would play together because she feels sad. The friend decides to watch television. This story violated an expectation of mutual help: that friends will forego a personal pleasure to help the other through an emotional difficulty.

The third story depicted a child who, to celebrate her birthday, invited a friend to a fancy restaurant. When the protagonist and her mother pick up the friend on the way to the restaurant, they find that she is intending to wear blue jeans and a torn work shirt. This story violated an expectation of conventional adherence: that in the context of a shared public activity marking a special event, friends will adhere to conventional dress standards.

Half of the children were presented with these stories in the following order: deception, conventional dress, and emotional support; the other half of subjects had the reverse order. After presentation of each story, children were asked questions to determine their comprehension of it. All but three of the youngest subjects (subsequently dropped from the study and replaced) were able to comprehend each of the stories and took the violations seriously. Subjects also understood the distinction between a close ("best") friend and casual ("kind-of") friend.

After each story, a series of questions were posed pertaining to the three major issues under investigation. First, children were asked to evaluate the violation (e.g., "Is it all right that X said she did not have her lunch?") and then probed for their justifications. Second, a set of questions elicited children's judgments about the maintenance of relations with and future reliance on a close and casual friend. Specifically, for each level of friendship, they were asked whether the violation would lessen feelings of friendship (e.g., "Would X still be your best friend or would she drop a little?"), and whether a future expectation would be undermined (e.g., "If this best friend asked you for food the next day, would you share your lunch?").

In addition, children's reasoning was systematically probed as to why the violation would or would not affect their relationship with a close friend. Children were then asked whether an original state of expectation (with a close and casual friend) could be restored through (a) an apology (e.g., "If this best friend apologized and said 'I'm sorry,' would you believe the next day that she was telling the truth and didn't have her lunch?"), and (b) an explicit statement not to repeat the violation (e.g., "Let's say your best friend said she would tell you the truth the next time; and the next day came and she told you she left her lunch at home, and she asked you to share your lunch. Would you believe she left her lunch at home?").

Finally, for the third issue, children were asked whether they would have negative feelings toward a violator. For example, "After what happened, how would you feel about this best friend?" And, if they had such feelings, whether those negative feelings would be greater for a close friend, for a casual friend, or the same for both. For example, "Who would you be most upset with: the best friend, the kind-of friend, or would it not matter?"[1]

Coding and Reliability

Coding manuals were first formulated from the responses of 50% of the subjects (a total of 30 children, with 10 from each age group).

[1] The term *trust* was not used during the interview unless a subject spontaneously mentioned it. This approach follows a line of social cognitive research (e.g., on morality [Kohlberg, 1971; Turiel, 1983]) where individuals' knowledge about a concept is obtained by eliciting their assessments of a conceptually-relevant situation (e.g., involving stealing) and responses to related questions (e.g., about what constitutes right action and why). This approach differs from a more global one used in much of the social cognitive research on friendship mentioned earlier, in which subjects are asked to define conceptually-related terms (e.g., "What is a friend?") and describe relevant situations. We chose the former approach partly because pilot data suggested that young children have difficulty conveying their knowledge about trust when they are asked to define the term abstractly (e.g., "What is trust?") and to generate relevant situations.

The coding manuals were applied to the responses from the other 50% of the children. The results from both groups were combined for statistical analyses.

Three types of responses were coded. The evaluative responses were coded for content choices as determined by type of question (all right/not all right, yes/no, etc.). The justifications for the initial evaluative question for each story were scored with a coding system adapted from Davidson, Turiel, and Black (1983). Summary description of the categories in this coding system are presented in Table 1. The analysis of children's reasons for their judgments as to whether a close friendship would be maintained or lessened as a consequence of a violation of a social expectation revealed three categories, which we refer to as *relational orientations*. These orientations, which are summarized in Table 2, reflect the child's central bases for viewing social expectations as part of close friendship relations.

Coding reliability was assessed through recoding by a second scorer of the responses of 20 subjects. The second judge was not aware of the child's age or the hypotheses of the study. Interjudge agreement for the content choice responses to the evaluative questions ranged from 92% to 97%. Interjudge agreement for the coding of justifications was 73%. When the justification categories were collapsed by the story with which they were predominantly associated (see Results), the interjudge agreement was 85%. Interjudge agreement for the relational orientations (Table 2) was 77%.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses did not show effects for sex of subject. In the large number of comparisons tested (8 questions for each of three stories), only responses to one question for one story yielded significant sex differences. Thus, the data for girls and boys were collapsed for all further analyses. Age-related findings are presented solely when significant differences were found. In all other cases it can be assumed that there were no significant age differences.

Four nonparametric statistical tests were used. Responses coded dichotomously (e.g., yes/no) were analyzed with Cochran's Q as a test of equality of correlated proportions. Responses which fell into one of three categories (e.g., yes/maybe/no) were analyzed with Friedman's test, which is an extension of Cochran's Q for more than two levels of responses. In effect, both tests determine if a significant change in subjects' responses occurred across each of the three stories. Significant omnibus tests were followed with post hoc, pairwise

Table 1. Justification Categories and Illustrative Responses

Category	*Description (Sample Responses in Parentheses)*
Appeal to fairness	Appeal to maintaining a balance of rights between persons. ("It wouldn't be fair to me. Because he would have more food and I would have less. And we would be even if he just kept his mouth shut"; "And then he has his full lunch and a half, and it just wouldn't be fair.")
Other's physical welfare	Appeal to the physical interest of persons other than the actor. ("Because I didn't have my lunch, and I'll go hungry for the rest of the day.")
Interpersonal emotional concern	Appeal to emotional concern for persons. ("Because it would make me feel bad that all he wants to do is watch television"; "Cause he wasn't considering my feelings. He wasn't caring for somebody.")
Custom or tradition	Appeal to social customs and traditions. ("On a special occasion, most people get dressed up"; "Because it's a good restaurant, and you are supposed to dress nicely in a good restaurant.")
Personal choice	Appeal to individual preferences or prerogatives. ("It's his mind, his body, he can do what he wants with it"; "She can dress however she wants"), and to individual preferences and prerogatives that are juxtaposed with contrary statements ("It is their choice, but she shouldn't be wearing those sorts of clothes for a fancy restaurant"; "He can watch TV if he wants to, but it hurts your feelings.")
Maintaining or establishing relationships	Appeal to maintaining or establishing a personal relationship. ("You have to be honest so you can keep friends"; "You're not going to get friends like that, if you don't tell the truth and they find out.")
Social disapproval or discomfort	Appeal to feeling social disapproval or discomfort. ("You would feel embarrassed that you came with somebody"; "They will think that you look ugly"; "People might start laughing at him.")
Obligation	Appeal to a priori obligations or duties between persons, including personal conscience and trust. ("He will be feeling guilty for doing it"; "Because nobody would know what was true or not, if what you said was really true"; "And they think they can trust you, but they can't, so then they start acting like they can't.")

Table 2. Relational Orientation Categories and Illustrative Responses

Category	*Response*
Particularistic	Friendship relations viewed as relatively changeable. Judgments depend on particular events and/or personal predilections. ("Because she lied to me." "Because I wanted him to play with me." "Because he did something I don't like." "Because he didn't do anything to me.")
Generalized	Friendship relations no longer viewed as disrupted by a single or small violation of expected behavior; rather, disruption requires a set of such violations or a major violation. Friendships are approached from the perspective of on-going relations. Stability of relations is based on quantitative factors, such as the number of times a violation is committed or the magnitude of the consequences. ("She would still be my friend as long as she didn't do it a lot of times." "Like if he stole a clock from me, or something [more valuable], then I would be mad and he would drop a little.")
Integrative	Friendship relations viewed as having potential for high stability. Judgments integrate quantitative factors with the issue of how a violation bears on the quality of the relationship, especially in terms of reliance, trust, and reciprocity. ("All those years of being friends and stuff, why let it go away in one day." "After he lied to me, I wouldn't trust him." "Because they weren't feeling for you what you thought they might be feeling for you.")

contrasts (Marascuilo & McSweeney, 1977).[2] McNemar's statistic was used to determine if responses differed depending on the level of closeness in the friendship. Kendall's Tau for ordered qualitative variables was used to test for age trends in both the relational orientations and categories of perceived emotional reactions to friends who violate social expectations.

[2]For all possible contrasts, $Z = \frac{\Psi}{SE\ \Psi}$. See Marascuilo and McSweeney (1977) for derived formulas for each test's standard error of measurement. To complete the test of statistical significance, the Z value is then compared to the Scheffé critical value (S^*), where $S^* = \sqrt{\Psi^2_{K-1;\,1-\alpha}}$

Table 3. Frequency of Justification Categories

	Story Theme		
Justification Category	*Deception*	*Conventional Dress*	*Emotional Support*
Appeal to fairness	24	0	0
Obligation	23	0	0
Maintain or establish relationships	14	0	1
Other's physical welfare	8	0	0
Custom or tradition	0	31	1
Social disapproval or discomfort	0	26	1
Personal choice	0	22	39
Interpersonal emotional concern	1	2	48

Note. Some subjects gave multiple justifications. All justifications were coded for each subject.

Evaluations and Justifications for the Violations

The majority of children negatively evaluated each of the violations. However, a greater number negatively evaluated the violation entailing deception (97%) than the violations entailing conventional dress (76%) or emotional support (61%). There was a significant association between story and response, $Q(2) = 20.18$, $p < .001$. Two pairwise contrasts were significant: deception to conventional dress, $Z = -2.56$, $p < .05$; and deception to emotional support, $Z = -4.48$, $p < .001$.

Justifications were coded with the categories in Table 1. Table 3 presents the frequencies of justifications, which show that different justifications were used to support evaluations of each of the violations. In the deception story, most of the justifications (99%) comprise four categories: fairness, obligation, maintaining or establishing relationships, and physical welfare. In the conventional dress story, 98% of the justifications comprise the categories of custom or tradition, social approval or discomfort, and personal choice. Finally, in the emotional support story, 97% of the justifications comprise the categories of interpersonal emotional concern and personal choice. The only justification substantially used for more than one story was the personal choice category.

Maintaining and Reestablishing Friendship Relations

To investigate how social expectations help maintain friendships, children were asked if their friendships would be lessened due to each of the three violations. Results showed that the majority of children (76%) would feel less friendly with a close friend after both the deception and emotional support violations; significantly fewer sub-

jects (17%) would feel less friendly after the conventional dress violation, $Q(2) = 54.44$, $p < .001$; for both pairwise contrasts, $Z = -6.39$, $p < .001$. A similar pattern was found regarding a casual friend. More children would feel less friendly with a casual friend after the deception violation (77%) and emotional support violation (68%) than after the violation of the dress convention (37%), $Q(2) = 23.11$, $p < .001$; deception to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -4.57$, $p < .001$; and emotional support to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -3.58$, $p < .005$. Age differences were found in responses to the question of whether feelings toward a casual friend would be lessened by the conventional dress violation. Whereas the majority of 6- to 7-year-olds (58%) would feel less friendly, a minority of the older subjects (26%) would feel so, $\chi^2(2) = 6.09$, $p < .05$.

The McNemar test was used to compare the perceived changes in friendliness between the close and casual friends. For each story, a McNemar test was performed to determine if a significant change occurred in children's judgments when the level of the friendship changed from being close to casual. A significant change was found in only the conventional dress story, in which fewer children stated they would feel less friendly with a close friend than with a casual friend, $\chi_M^2(1) = 8.84$, $p < .005$.

Given that violations of social expectations can lessen the level of a friendship, a further issue explored was whether the original reliance on the friend can be restored after the violation. Children were asked whether the reliance (with close and casual friends) could be restored through (a) an apology, and (b) an explicit statement that the violation would not be repeated. Table 4 shows the percentage of subjects who would reestablish reliance after a friend's apology. Only a minority (23%) would reestablish reliance in the deception story after a close friend apologized, whereas a significantly greater percentage of subjects would again rely on the friend in the other two violations, $\chi_r^2(2) = 26.91$, $p < .001$; deception to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -5.16$, $p < .001$, and deception to emotional support contrast, $Z = -3.06$, $p < .01$. Table 4 shows similar findings when the context involved a casual friend. Again, only a minority of subjects (7%) would reestablish reliance on the friend in the deception story after an apology. A significantly greater percentage of children would rely on the friend in the other two violations, $\chi_r^2(2) = 25.39$, $p < .001$; deception to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -4.86$, $p < .001$, and deception to emotional support contrast, $Z = -3.58$, $p < .005$.

As shown also by Table 4, similar results were obtained when the means of restoring reliance was through an explicit statement by the

Table 4. Judgments (in percentages) as to Whether Reliance Would Be Reestablished After Apology (A) and Promise (P) from Close and Casual Friends

Type of Friend	Response	Story Theme: Deception		Conventional Dress		Emotional Support	
		A	P	A	P	A	P
Close	Yes	23	24	80	85	55	71
	Maybe	42	58	18	13	30	25
	No	35	18	2	2	15	4
Casual	Yes	7	15	56	66	40	42
	Maybe	55	53	40	23	53	32
	No	38	32	4	11	7	26

violator not to repeat the violation (in effect, making a promise). In the context of a close friendship, only a minority of children (24%) would reestablish belief in the friend's word in the deception story, as compared to a significantly greater percentage who would restore belief in the emotional support (71%) and dress convention (85%) stories, $\chi_r^2(2) = 29.24$, $p < .001$; deception to emotional support contrast, $Z = -4.00$, $p < .001$, and deception to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -5.15$, $p < .001$. In the context of a casual friendship it was also only a minority of subjects (15%) who would reestablish belief in the deception story. A significantly greater percentage would reestablish belief in the emotional support (42%) and conventional dress (66%) stories, $\chi_r^2(2) = 18.20$, $p < .001$; deception to emotional support contrast, $Z = -2.62$, $p < .05$, and deception to conventional dress contrast, $Z = -4.22$, $p < .001$.

Reactions to Violations of Social Expectations

Children were asked if each of the violations would produce negative feelings toward the violator and whether such negative feelings would be greater for a close friend, a casual friend, or the same for both types of friends. Table 5 presents the percentage of children, as divided by age, who would not have negative feelings and whose negative feelings would be the same for both types of friends or greater for one type of friend. As can be seen by Table 5, few children stated that the violators would not produce negative feelings.

Table 5 also shows age differences in the patterns of response to this question. Very few of the youngest subjects stated they would have more negative feelings toward a close friend. Most of these children stated that their negative feelings would be the same for both types of friends (60% to 65%) or that they would have more negative

Table 5. Subjects' Negative Feelings (in percentages) Toward the Violator as Divided by Age

Response	Story Theme		
	Deception	*Conventional Dress*	*Emotional Support*
Ages 6-7			
Not upset with either friend	0	5	5
More upset with close friend	5	0	15
More upset with casual friend	35	30	20
Equally upset with both friends	60	65	60
Ages 8-9			
Not upset with either friend	5	15	5
More upset with close friend	45	40	40
More upset with casual friend	15	10	20
Equally upset with both friends	35	35	35
Ages 10-11			
Not upset with either friend	0	25	0
More upset with close friend	80	50	85
More upset with casual friend	10	5	10
Equally upset with both friends	10	20	5

feelings toward the casual friend (20% to 35%). With increasing age, more of the children would have more negative feelings toward the close friend. These age differences were tested by comparing the number of children choosing the close friend with the combined number choosing the casual friend or both types of friends. There was a significant association between age and response in each story: for the deception story Kendall's Tau = $-.38$, $Z = -1.75$, $p < .05$; dress convention story, Tau = $-.42$, $Z = -1.68$, $p < .05$; emotional support story, Tau = $-.54$, $Z = -2.48$, $p < .01$.

Concepts of Relationships and Social Expectations

The final set of analyses pertain to the children's conceptions of relationships as evident in their reasoning about the role of social expectations in the maintenance of close friendships. Reasons for their judgments as to whether the violations lessen the friendship (as reported in the section on maintaining and reestablishing friendship relations) were coded in accordance with the three relational orientations (summarized in Table 2) of particularistic, generalized, and integrative relationships. Table 6, which presents the percentage of children in each age group who held each of the orientations in reasoning about the maintenance of friendships, shows a clear age-related pattern. The responses of the youngest children were predominantly within the particularistic orientation, whereas the oldest

Table 6. Percentage of Relational Orientations by Age

Response	Story Theme		
	Deception	*Conventional Dress*	*Emotional Support*
Ages 6-7			
Particularistic	90	71	90
Generalized	5	12	5
Integrative	5	18	5
Ages 8-9			
Particularistic	28	24	35
Generalized	33	35	15
Integrative	39	41	50
Ages 10-11			
Particularistic	10	11	0
Generalized	15	26	5
Integrative	75	63	95

children's responses were predominantly within the integrative orientation. The responses of the middle group (8- and 9-year-olds) were divided among the three orientations and they showed more use of the generalized orientation than the other two age groups. Significant associations between age and orientation were found: deception story, Tau = .41, $Z = 4.53$, $p < .001$; conventional dress story, Tau = .30, $Z = 3.17$, $p < .001$; emotional support story, Tau = .45, $Z = 5.04$, $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons using the Bowker test did not yield any significant differences in children's relational orientations across story conditions.

DISCUSSION

In her philosophical examination of trust, Baier (1986) poses the question, What is the difference between trusting others and merely relying on them? Baier answers that "We all depend on one anothers' psychology in countless ways, but this is not yet to trust them. The trusting can be betrayed, or at least let down, and not just disappointed" (p. 235). The present study addressed this sense of being let down by assessing whether each of the violations of social expectations would lessen feelings of intimacy with the friend. It was found that the majority of children would feel their friendship was diminished in intimacy by the social expectation violation within both moral contexts. In contrast, most subjects felt that the conventional dress violation would not lessen feelings of friendship. This finding occurred even though more subjects evaluated the conventional dress violation as wrong than did they the emotional support violation.

If one accepts that the possibility of being let down (and in major violations betrayed) is necessary and not just central to the idea of trust, then the results provide suggestive evidence that conventional social expectations lie outside the trust boundary. This interpretation, moreover, is supported by the justification results. Ninety-eight percent of the justifications for the conventional act violation comprised custom or tradition, social approval or discomfort, and personal choice. Thus, the conventional expectation did not take on a moral imperative by virtue of its role in the mutuality of close friendship relations.

Differences in reasoning about social expectations were also examined where the moral context primarily involved issues of fairness and welfare (the deception story) and where such issues, while present, were contingent on the interpersonal relationship (the emotional support story). Results support the proposition that the contingent status of the resulting obligation differentiated social expectations in these two contexts. Children's evaluations of the violation entailing deception were consistently negative. Almost all subjects considered the deception wrong and based their evaluations on reasons such as unfairness and the need to maintain obligations or adhere to duties. Because other research has shown that children's negative evaluations of a set of moral transgressions generalize to a range of perpetrators (Damon, 1977; Piaget, 1932; Turiel, 1983), it is likely that children would negatively evaluate deception also in impersonal relationships (acquaintances, strangers). Of course, individuals may have stronger expectations of honesty from friends than impersonal relations, and thus deception might affect such relationships differently. The distinction between social expectations in personal and impersonal relations requires further investigation.

Unlike being truthful, providing emotional support to a friend was shown to be a contingent obligation. This conclusion is based on the finding that (a) fewer children negatively evaluated the failure to provide emotional support than deception, whereas (b) an equal number of subjects thought feelings of friendship would be lessened by each violation. Two competing factors were taken into account in evaluating the failure to provide emotional support, as reflected in the Personal Choice and Interpersonal Emotional Concern justification categories. Children judged that it is the individual's personal prerogative to engage in an activity like watching television instead of providing emotional support to a friend. However, this personal prerogative was regarded to conflict with an obligation to be concerned with the emotional needs of others.

It has been proposed (Bok, 1978) that violations of trust entailing deception not only can diminish intimacy in friendship relations, but, correspondingly, can cause the victim to be suspicious and wary of new overtures. The results support this proposition. Even after the friend apologized or promised not to repeat the violation, children would not reestablish reliance on the friend after the deception violation. In contrast, an apology or promise could reestablish reliance after both the conventional and emotional support violations. For the conventional violation, this finding is not surprising in that the violation did not undermine the friendship. But the emotional support violation did undermine the friendship, and yet it could be reestablished by an apology or promise. Possibly, this latter result is tied to the contingent nature of the interpersonal relationship wherein apologies and promises can take on greater weight in assessing further trustworthiness.

Two related points are of interest. First, children judged that the conventional violation would affect a casual friendship more than a close friendship, suggesting that, in at least some contexts, children regard conventions as more important for regulating casual than close friendships. Second, fewer children evaluated the emotional support violation as wrong (compared to the conventional violation), yet more children thought it would result in a diminution of friendship. This finding suggests that there is not always a direct relation between a negative evaluation of a social act and the act's negative affect on the closeness of a friendship.

The conclusions drawn thus far regarding differences among judgments about the three types of violations apply to children of all three age groups. However, other aspects of children's understanding of relationships showed age-related differences. As outlined in Table 2, across violation type children's orientations to maintaining close friendships shifted with age from (a) specific individual inclinations, to (b) a more generalized view based mainly on the frequency and magnitude of positive and negative interactions, to (c) a view of the role of positive and negative interactions in the reciprocity of the relationship. Consistent with this shift toward greater concern with reciprocity in friendships was the following finding: Younger children expressed greater negative feelings toward a casual friend or equally for both types of friends; with increasing age children were more likely, particularly after the deception and emotional support violations, to have greater negative feelings toward close friends than casual friends.

These findings about social expectations as they bear on friendship relations are in accord with previous research which shows that

with increasing age children give importance to reciprocity in their friendship relations (Bigelow, 1977; Bigelow & LaGaipa, 1980; Rotenberg, 1980; Selman, 1980). The findings also show that in the context of friendship relations children differentiate moral from conventional social expectations, and between obligations that are based on issues of fairness and human welfare and those that are contingent on the interpersonal relationship.

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