Do children always trust confident individuals? Not when it comes to moral deliberations.

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Results

Children rated the confident speaker higher on how much they liked her, how smart she was, and how much they agreed with her when she responded to factual questions, but not moral deliberations.

1. Children rated the confident speaker significantly higher on level of confidence, regardless of the domain.

![Confidence Graph]

2. Significant interactions between domain and level of confidence were found on:

![Likability Graph]

Conclusions & Future Directions

Children differentially interpret confidence as a cue to one’s credibility depending on the domain. That is, children preferred the confident individual when learning factual information, but did not when deliberating about moral claims.

For moral deliberations, confidence may be interpreted as overconfidence or a rush to judgment.

This research sheds light on the remarkable level of sophistication with which children are able to evaluate informants and the credibility of information they are providing. This allows children to discern who is a trustworthy source of information across contexts, which has important implications for children’s learning and the transmission of knowledge.

Future research could include older children (i.e., over 8 years old) or adults, to see if and when they favor the hesitant individual in the moral domain. Future studies could also use a forced-choice design wherein children hear conflicting responses from a confident and a hesitant speaker and must choose between the two.

References


Acknowledgements: This research was supported by a UM University Grant Program Small Grant (No. 3254531) to R.S.

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