PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, (ISSN: 2537-950X), 1988, *2*(1), 13–26

http://dx.doi.org/10.2224/phd.6390

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S SADNESS

KEN J. ROTENBERG
Lakehead University
KATHY MARS AND NICKI CRICK
Purdue University

We asked 96 children from first, third, fifth, and seventh grades to describe situations in which they were sad, and posed questions to assess the related causes, intensity, motives, and consequences. Results showed that sadness was caused by harm in the majority of incidents. There was a shift with age in the nature of the harmful causes of sadness, toward a greater frequency of harm to others as opposed to harm to self, as well as a greater frequency of psychological versus physical harm. Harm to pets, isolation, and prevention of goal achievement by another were causes of sadness and the latter decreased with age. Kindergarten children reported a lower intensity of sadness than did older children. As age increased, so did children's identification of motives for sadness. The most and least frequent of consequences of children's sadness were passive nonexpression and verbal expression of feelings, respectively. Finally, there was a decrease with age in children's redirective behavior (quick shifts towards happy activities) as a consequence of sadness.

Keywords: children, sadness, feelings, psychological harm, physical harm.

Recently, developmental psychologists have become aware that little is known about the development of children's emotion and its role in social

Ken J. Rotenberg, Department of Psychology, Lakehead University; Kathy Mars and Nicki Crick, Purdue University.
Portions of this paper were presented at the Canadian Psychological Association meeting in July, 1982.
The authors thank the Windsor Public School Board, the teachers and principals (Mr. J. Joswick and Mr. D. Ferguson, respectively) at Eastwood and King Edward Schools, Dr. D. Pederson for his suggestions concerning the paper, and J. Rotenberg and R. Schnayer for their assistance with the research.
The content and formatting of this article were edited and updated in 2016, with efforts made to preserve the original meaning.
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ken J. Rotenberg, Department of Psychology, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B5E1, Canada.

behavior (Yarrow, 1979), particularly regarding emotional development during middle childhood (see Hesse & Cicchetti, 1982). Thus, we examined the development of children's sadness from the beginning to the end of middle childhood and onset of adolescence, focusing in particular on the causes, intensity, motives, and consequences of children's sadness that occur in children's normal social environments.

A practical motive also guided our research. A common problem encountered by parents is how to respond to, and lessen their children's experiences of sadness. Rogers (1977) suggested that parents' empathic responding to children's sadness and other emotions promotes mental health in children and well-being in the family. At present, however, no normative data exist concerning the causes, intensity, motives, and consequences of sadness of different-aged children. Such information could provide a reference point for parents and clinicians can compare an individual child's experiences of sadness and even anticipate future sadness experiences.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspective

Averill's (1974, 1978) social constructivist theory of emotion, in which it is assumed that emotions are transitory social roles and arousal is transformed into an emotion, guided the present research. Specifically, an emotion such as sadness is considered part of a scenario in which the individual, through social norms, interprets his/her arousal and the conditions surrounding it as sadness and perceives the justifiable response to the emotion. The following four assumptions of Averill's theory are critical to the present research: there is a strong cognitive component of emotion; understanding social norms is essential to understanding emotion; there are sets of possible causes and possible consequences of an emotion, with the given subset of causes or consequences determined by learned social norms; and emotions have a motivational component and are associated with various social motives. We integrated Averill's theory with various developmental theories.

Cognitive Development and the Causes of Children's Sadness

Our primary focus was on how children's emotions, such as sadness, change over the course of middle childhood. If emotion has a cognitive component, then some changes in emotion are suggested by the fact that there is dramatic cognitive growth from the beginning to the end of middle childhood. Piaget (1954/1981) and other scholars (Cowan, 1982; Hesse & Cicchetti, 1982; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) have proposed that emotional development is related to cognitive development; however, the nature of

this relationship is uncertain. We adopted the position advanced by Hesse and Cicchetti (1982), that cognition and emotion are different phenomena, but cognitive development is one determinant of emotional development. According to Hesse and Cicchetti, emotion, in contrast to cognition, has the following distinct characteristics: intensity, duration, and evaluation. Specifically, emotions are different from cognition because individuals experience varying intensities of an inner state, the experiences vary in duration from transitory mood to enduring temperament, and the experiences have inherent attributes ranging from pleasant to unpleasant. Added to this list is Averill's (1974, 1978) notion that emotions are social in nature and that the causes as well as motives and consequences of emotion are determined by learned social norms.

Piaget (1954/1981) and colleagues (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) have identified ways in which cognitive development can determine emotional development. First, according to the Piagetian theory, young children's cognitive development and related emotions are centered on their own perspective (egocentric) and they increasingly decenter with age to consider the perspectives of others.

Second, according to Piaget's (1954/1981) theory, the shift from the preoperational to concrete operational stage of cognitive development represents a change from dependence on variable external appearance in understanding object relations to an increasing understanding of the invariant properties of objects in the form of conservation. Piaget and Inhelder (1969) proposed that a corresponding change in emotions occurred and that, during the preoperational stage, children's emotions were transient and "moment-to-moment" experiences dependent on the immediate variations in external events, whereas during the concrete operational stage children conserved emotions and experienced true enduring sentiment. Furthermore, Piaget and Inhelder implied that, during the course of concrete operational stage, children's emotions become more enduring and encompass more enduring psychological properties, such as self-identity or the perceived identity of others.

Glasberg (1979; see also Glasberg & Aboud, 1981) carried out research bearing on Piagetian notions of emotional development, specifically regarding sadness in children. Guided by theory and research on childhood depression, Glasberg proposed that sadness in children from kindergarten and second grade was caused by their experiences of harmful events. As Glasberg had expected, children reported that most sad situations were caused by harmful events. Moreover, second grade children gave more psychological causes of sadness than did kindergarten children, at least for mild intensities of sadness.

Glasberg and Aboud (1981) used the sad situations resulting from Glasberg's (1979) research to further investigate children's sadness by

presenting these as stories to kindergarten and second grade children, who were required to imagine either that they or another child was the protagonist in the stories and to judge the likeability of him/her. Kindergarten children assigned greater likeability to themselves than to others (as protagonists), whereas second grade children assigned equally low likeability to themselves and others. Glasberg and Aboud interpreted this as reflecting the tendency for older children to integrate sadness experiences into their own self-evaluation and experience a resulting drop in self-esteem, in the form of less self-liking. They suggested that the younger children did not possess the self-identity that would permit this self-evaluation process, which is consistent with the implications of Piaget's theory of emotion (1954/1981) that later in childhood (the concrete operational stage), children's emotions become more enduring and part of the enduring psychological property of self-identity.

Wolman, Lewis, and King (1971), in their investigation of emotion development in children ranging in age from 5 to 13 years, found evidence for Piaget's (1954/1981) position. The children were asked when they felt a variety of emotions, including sadness, and the locus of causality of their emotions changed with age from one concerning external causes of emotion to one concerning the internal and subjective causes of emotion. The notion that young children's emotions are dominated by external events is consistent with Piaget's theory of emotional development.

Motives for Sadness

According to Averill (1978), adults perceive motives that they believe underlie their emotions and the behavioral expression of their emotion. Averill proposed that perceived motives are an intrinsic part of the social norms guiding emotional experience and are usually intentions to achieve social goals or objectives. In Averill's investigation of anger in adults, respondents reported both social antagonistic–destructive and socially constructive motives for their anger. However, do children have perceived motives for their emotions and, in particular, for the emotion of sadness?

Hesse and Cicchetti (1982) discussed children's perceptions of the motives for their emotional expressions and suggested that this skill is similar to that of metacognitive memory skills. This notion led us to form the hypothesis that, like metacognitive skills in memory (Flavell, 1977), children's perception of the motives for their emotion should increase across middle childhood. Researchers of the development of perspective taking (e.g., Shantz, 1975) have suggested one type of perceived motive for emotion that children might have and one that should increase with age, indicating that children's consideration of different and multiple viewpoints increases across middle childhood. It seems plausible that

children's perception of emotion as motivation for revealing viewpoints, even their own viewpoints, would show a comparable increase with age.

Consequences

Averill (1974, 1978) proposed that there are a number of consequences or behavioral expressions of emotion, although no developmental theorist (Glasberg, 1979; Hesse & Cicchetti, 1982; Piaget, 1954/1981) has proposed how children of different ages behaviorally express their emotions, such as sadness. However, Rogers' (1977) clinical concern does bear on this issue. Verbal expression is the primary means of emotional expression in Rogers' empathy-based therapy and proposed therapeutic interaction. If parents or clinicians are to empathetically respond to children's sadness, as suggested by Rogers, then it is necessary to assess how often children at different ages verbally express their sadness.

Measures of Emotion

A controversial research issue concerns the measurement of emotion. Theorists (e.g., Hesse & Cicchetti, 1982; Yarrow, 1979) have identified three components and corresponding measures of emotion: physiological, nonverbal–behavioral, and verbal. The problem we encountered was the choice of the most appropriate component/measure. Consistent with Hesse and Cicchetti's (1982) hypothesis, we expected that an emotion such as sadness would not be reliably detected by physiological and nonverbal–behavioral measures. This is because researchers have not yet been able to identify physiological indices of emotions in children, such as sadness, nor have they been able to detect the various nuances of nonverbal expression of emotions, such as sadness, in children. The nonverbal expression of sadness may be subtle and not evident at all. For these reasons, the emotion of sadness was assessed by a verbal measure, composed of a questionnaire method that was designed to assess the children's reports of the conditions surrounding their self-labeled emotion of sadness.

Theoretical reasons also guided the choice of the verbal measure. According to Piaget (1954/1981), children's emotional experiences are cognitively defined. Similarly, Averill (1978) proposed that emotional experiences are defined by cognitively based social norms. From these perspectives, children's emotion of sadness may be best understood by investigating the conditions surrounding what the children themselves identify as sadness. Moreover, children's own reports of the causes, intensity, motives, and consequences of their sadness provide some insight into the associations that define their sadness experience.

One potential problem with the verbal measure concerns children's "understanding" of the emotion terms. Gilbert (1969) found that there were increases between ages 4 and 6 in children's knowledge of emotion

words and in their expression of emotion. Gilbert's findings lead to the conclusion that, by 6 years of age, children have a moderate degree of sophistication in their knowledge and expression of emotions such as sadness. On the basis of this research, we designed the present study to assess emotional development in children from the age of 6.

One problem with the questionnaire method as a means of investigating child development, is its dependence on children's language production. The following procedures were implemented in the present study to limit that problem: (a) specific questions were used, (b) selection-type answers to given questions were used, and (c) analyses were adjusted for language production by age. Other researchers (e.g., Bauer, 1976) have used such a modified questionnaire method to investigate the emotion of fear in very young children with considerable success.

Overview of the Study and Development of Hypotheses

We employed a procedure similar to the one used by Glasberg (1979), whereby the sadness of first, third, fifth and seventh grade children was investigated by asking the children to report situations in which they were sad and then posing a series of questions designed to assess the causes, intensity, motives, and consequences of their sadness.

Causes.

Hypothesis 1: Sadness will be caused by harm in a majority of the incidents.

Hypothesis 2: Young children's sadness will occur primarily when they themselves have experienced harm; however, with increases in age, children's sadness will be increasingly caused by harm occurring to others.

Because sadness is a personal experience, we expected older children to often experience sadness when harm occurred to others as well to themselves.

Hypothesis 3: Young children's sadness will be caused by concrete (physical) harmful events, whereas, with increases in age, children's sadness will be increasingly caused by psychological harmful events.

The problem with investigating this hypothesis is that, by definition, harmful events must have a psychological impact to cause sadness. Following the research strategy of Glasberg and Aboud (1981) and Piaget's (1954/1981) theory of emotional development, psychological causes were considered to be those that harmed a person's own or another's self-esteem. Within this framework, the psychological causes were associated with the development of self-identity or the perceived identity of others.

Intensity.

Hypothesis 4: On the basis of Piaget's (1954/1981) proposal that sadness is a transient experience in young children but is more enduring in older

children, young children will experience a lower intensity of sadness than will older children.

Motives.

Hypothesis 5: Guided by Averill's (1978) concept that individuals regard emotions and emotional expression as a means of affecting social relationships, the following will be plausible motives for children's sadness: (a) to make others feel bad (guilt), (b) to make others notice them (recognition), (c) to make others see their point of view (viewpoint), and (d) to make others change their behavior (behavior change). However, not all emotional experiences will have social objectives, so some children will view the motive for their emotions simply as one of expression (expression). Further, children's perceived motives for sadness, particularly the viewpoint motive, will increase with age.

Consequences. No hypotheses were advanced concerning the consequences of sadness, although we expected that there would be verbal expression among a number of other different types of consequences.

Method

Participants

Participants were 96 children, 24 each (12 boys and 12 girls) from first (aged 6–7 years), third (aged 8–9 years), fifth (aged 10–11 years), and seventh (aged 12–13 years) grades, all of whom attended two public schools located in Windsor, Ontario.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to assess four facets of sadness: causes, intensity, motives, and consequences. Items were identified alphabetically and were presented in that order.

Causes of sadness were assessed by asking "What happened?" and "What exactly made you sad (then)?" (Questions A and D, respectively). Intensity of sadness was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale composed of a series of black columns labeled (in order of shortest to tallest) *just a tiny bit sad*, *a bit sad*, *kind of sad*, *very sad*, and *very, very sad* (for more details, see Rotenberg, 1980). The participant was asked to "show on the scale how sad you were" (Question C). Motives for sadness were assessed by a series of probe questions (Question E). Specifically, the participant was asked to answer Yes/No to the following motives: "Were you sad in order to (1) make others feel bad, (2) make others notice you, (3) make the other person see my point of view, (4) make the other person change their ways, or (5) just to express yourself." If the participant did not answer "yes" to one of the motives, they were asked "Do you not know?"

Consequences of sadness were assessed by asking the participant "What did you do when you were sad?" (Question F).

Procedure

Participants were tested individually and trained to correctly identify the labels of the intensity rating scale. They were asked to "think about the times over the past 2 weeks in which you were sad," and up to three situations were recorded in the questionnaire. After all of the situations were reported, the remaining survey items were posed for each situation separately. As indicated, limitations were imposed regarding the number of situations recalled and the time of the situation. The limitation on the number originated from the pilot research on 28 children from the age groups, in which it was found that 91% of the children gave up to, but not more than, three sadness situations. We considered that if a reasonable limitation on number was not imposed then the findings could have been disproportionally affected by a highly verbal child. The limit of 2 weeks for the sadness situation was imposed to increase the likelihood that the children could accurately recall the incidents. Less certainty in recall might have been expected if the participants reported memories of their experiences earlier in development and time, which may have confounded the assessment of developmental differences in sadness.

Coding

Coding of the questionnaire was done by two naive raters. Both coders rated 50% of the protocols in order to assess interrater reliability and then each rated 50% of the protocols for analysis purposes.

The answers to the questions concerning the causes of sadness were coded into two mutually exclusive units: (1) harm that was further categorized into a 2 (self/other) × 2 (physical/psychological) matrix, and (2) the additional categories of pets, isolation, prevention of goal achievement by another, and residual. The first unit included all instances in which the participants were sad because damage occurred to a given person or his/her possessions. The instances were divided into whether the damage occurred to the participants themselves (*self*) or to another person (*other*) and whether it was a *physical* or *psychological* type of damage. The physical type of damage was any bodily damage to a person, including death and any physical damage to his/her possessions. The psychological type of harm was the damage to the self-esteem of a person, such as a verbal insult, failure at a task, rejection by another, and loss of friendship. If the damage occurred to the participants, it was coded as *self*; if the damage occurred to others, it was coded as *other*.

The second unit included all those instances where participants were sad for reasons that could not be categorized as physical/psychological harm to

self or other. The *pets* category was the sadness caused by harm occurring to pets. Because pets are animals, this cause of sadness could not be coded in the first unit. *Isolation* was the sadness caused by being alone and it was created in response to a relatively common report by the participants that being isolated from people (in general) made them sad. This category was coded separately because it was not clear whether the participants were being psychologically harmed. The *prevention of goal achievement* by another, was when the participants were sad because they were prevented from obtaining a desired object or goal by another person (e.g., "My mother did not allow me to go to the show"). This was coded separately because it was unclear whether the harm was physical or psychological. For example, the prevention of obtaining a desired toy could be considered to be a form of either physical or psychological harm. The residual category was included to assess all causes of sadness that did not fit into the other categories. Interrater agreement on the categories averaged 87% (agreement/total; range = 81%–92%).

Categories of the consequences of sadness were coded into five categories. *Verbal expression* was the participants' verbal expression of their feelings of sadness to others (e.g., "I told her that I felt very, very sad"). *Verbal statement* was the participant's verbal descriptions to others of the situations that made them sad. *Physical expression* was the physical expressions of crying, sad facial expression (e.g., "a sad face"), and lowered activity level (e.g., "I moped around"). *Passive nonexpression* was the participants not expressing their sadness in any fashion (physically or verbally). *Redirective behavior* was the participant quickly shifting from sad experiences to happy activities (e.g., "I just went and played with my toys to be happy"). The residual category included all the instances that that did not fit into the other categories. Interrater agreement on the categories averaged 89% (agreement/total; range = 85%–94%).

Results

First, third, fifth, and seventh grade participants reported 26, 36, 33, and 48 incidents of sadness, respectively. Because there was an inequity in the total number of incidents reported between the youngest and oldest participants, data were analyzed in terms of the proportion (presence/total) of categorized incidents at each grade. This reduce the likelihood of grade effects being found because of differences in incident report numbers.

With the exception of the intensity of sadness ratings, data were subjected to a chi-square analysis based on the log linear model (Knoke & Burke, 1980). This analysis yielded main effects of, and interactions between, the variables on the intercept that of the presence/total of given categories for each grade. This type of analysis is similar to analyses of

variance of proportion data but is considered by some authors to be more appropriate for nominal data (Knoke & Burke, 1980).

All of the following analyses were initially conducted with gender of the participant as a variable. None of these analyses revealed main effects of, or interactions with, participant's gender.

Causes

Harm. Consistent with our expectation, sadness was caused by harm in a majority (73%) of the incidents (including harm to pets). The proportions of the different types of harm were subjected to a 4 (grade) × 2 (self/other) × 2 (physical/psychological) log linear analysis; this yielded a main effect of physical/psychological, $\chi^2(1) = 7.85$, $p < .01$, in which physical harm (65 instances) was more frequently a cause of sadness than psychological harm (35 instances). The analysis also yielded the predicted interaction between grade and self/other, $\chi^2(3) = 7.89$, $p < .05$. This interaction was caused by the dominance of harm to self as a cause of sadness in first grade and an increase with age in the proportion of harm to other as a cause of sadness. There was some (nonsignificant) violation of this pattern between fifth and seventh grades. Proportions of harm to self and harm to other, respectively, as causes of sadness for each of the four grades were as follows: first grade = .80 and .20; third grade = .56 and .44; fifth grade = .27 and .73; and seventh grade = .44 and .56.

The analysis also yielded another predicted interaction but at a trend level, between grade and physical/psychological, $\chi^2(3) = 6.88$, $p < .10$. The interaction was caused by the dominance of physical harm as a cause of sadness in early grades and a shift with age to an increased proportion of psychological harm as a cause of sadness in seventh grades. Proportions of physical harm and psychological harm, respectively, as causes of sadness for each of the grades were as follows: first grade = .70 and .40; third grade = .78 and .22; fifth grade = .80 and .20; and seventh grade = .50 and .50.

Additional causes. The proportion of the residual category was low (.03) and excluded from analysis. Each of the remaining additional causes was subjected to a separate chi-square analysis, with grade as the dependent variable. Only the prevention of goal achievement was significant, $\chi^2(3) = 16.34$, $p < .01$, owing to the fact that prevention of goal achievement by another was less evident in seventh grade (.02) than in the other grades (first = .27, third = .24, and fifth = .40).

Intensity

Participants' ratings of the intensity of sadness were numbered 1 to 5 and subsequently subjected to a one-way analysis of variance, with grade as the dependent variable. For analysis purposes, ratings were all treated as

between-subjects scores. The analysis did not yield a significant effect of grade; however, the youngest participants did provide the lowest ratings of the intensity of sadness (*M*s = 3.00, 3.55, 3.21, and 3.42 for first, third, fifth, and seventh grades). The overall mean rating of the intensity of sadness was 3.30, representing a point somewhat above "kind of sad."

Motives

A substantial percentage (33%) of first graders responded to the motive question by saying that they "did not know." This pattern of answers, coupled with the general uncertainty of first grade students concerning motives, led to us analyzing the motives of the third, fifth, and seventh graders only. The proportions of the guilt and recognition motives were quite low (.01 and .03, respectively) and were excluded from the analysis. The proportions of the three remaining motives were subjected to a 3 (grade) × 3 (motive) log linear analysis; this yielded significant effects of motive, $\chi^2(2) = 13.81$, $p < .001$, and grade, $\chi^2(2) = 12.83$, $p < .002$. The former effect was due to both the fact that viewpoint (.46) and expression (.44) motives were more frequent than the behavior change motive (.19). The latter effect was caused by increases with age in the presence of motives, with the proportions of motives as follows: third grade = .20, fifth grade = .42, and seventh grade = .44. We then assessed age differences in each of the different types of motives separately; this yielded age increases in the viewpoint motive only, $\chi^2(2) = 7.83$, $p < .02$.

Consequences

The proportion of the residual category was low (.04) and excluded from the analysis. Proportions of the consequences of sadness were subjected to a 4 (grade) × 5 (category) log linear analysis; this analysis yielded a main effect of category, $\chi^2(4) = 78.33$, $p < .001$. The most frequent category was passive nonexpression (.51), followed by physical expression (.21), verbal statement (.16), redirective (.12), and verbalization of feeling (.02).

The analysis also yielded an interaction between grade and category $\chi^2(12) = 21.58$, $p < .05$. (Proportions of the types of consequences by grade are presented in Table 1.) Separate chi-square analyses were carried out to assess this interaction and, in particular, to determine which of the types of consequences changed with age. A significant age difference was found in the redirective behavior, $\chi^2(3) = 11.60$, $p < .01$, such that it was more frequent in first grade than in later grades. Two other analyses approached significance: verbal statement decreased with age, $\chi^2(3) = 6.59$, $p < .10$ and physical expression increased with age, $\chi^2(3) = 7.01$, $p < .10$.

Table 1. *Proportion of the Types of Consequences of Sadness for Each Grade*

	Type of consequence				
	Verbal expression	Verbal statement	Physical expression	Passive nonexpression	Redirective behavior
Grade					
1st	.04	.20	.08	.38	.29
3rd	.02	.26	.14	.51	.06
5th	.03	.12	.18	.55	.06
7th	.00	.06	.31	.54	.08

Discussion

A number of our hypotheses were supported by the findings. Consistent with the results of Glasberg (1979) and Glasberg and Aboud (1981) and our Hypothesis 1, children's sadness was caused by harm in a majority of incidents. The findings also supported Hypothesis 2, in that young children's sadness was primarily caused by harm occurring to them, whereas with increasing age, children's sadness became increasingly caused by harm occurring to others. The latter finding is consistent with Piaget's (1954/1981) theory that young children's emotions are centered on themselves (egocentric), whereas older children become decentered to include others in their emotion.

Supporting Hypothesis 5, children's perceived motives (particularly the viewpoint motive) for their emotions increased with age. This is consistent with Hesse and Cicchetti's (1982) notion that the perception of motives for emotion are similar to metacognitive skills of memory and, hence, increase with age. This is also consistent with perspective taking research (Shantz, 1975) in which children's identification of the perspective "viewpoint" motive was found to increase with age. Notably, children primarily identified viewpoint and expression as motives underlying their sadness.

We also gained partial support for Hypotheses 3 and 4, whereby the youngest children reported less intensity of sadness than did other children, but the difference was not statistically significant. Consistent with Piaget's (1954/1981) theory, sadness in young children was found to be primarily caused by concrete (physical) harm and there was some shift with age towards an increase in psychological harm as a cause of sadness. However, the shift toward greater psychological harm as a cause of sadness was only found between grades five and seven rather than between children in earlier grades, as was suggested by Piaget (1954/1981), Glasberg (1979), and Glasberg and Aboud (1981).

Two factors could account for the observed pattern of concrete harm and psychological harm as causes of sadness. First, researchers including Rotenberg (1982) have suggested that there is a substantial shift toward achieving psychological self-identity between the ages of kindergarten and

second grade. Glasberg (1979) and Glasberg and Aboud (1981) tested children of those ages; therefore, their findings may have been sensitive to age changes in self-identity in respect to sadness. Somewhat older children were tested in the present study and the findings may not have been sensitive to the age changes in psychological self-identity. Second, the shift toward greater psychological harm as a cause of sadness in children in grade 7 (13-year-olds) is consistent with the theory and research on adolescence. According to Erikson (1968; see also Elkind, 1967; Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Protinsky, 1975), adolescents experience an identity crisis and a form of egocentrism that leads to a heightened self-consciousness. The shift towards greater psychological causes of sadness in seventh grade may reflect the identity crisis. Furthermore, the observed shift toward somewhat more harm to self as a cause of sadness from fifth to seventh grades may reflect the renewed egocentrism in adolescence.

One other pattern of the cause of sadness emerged in this study: The prevention of goal achievement was a cause of sadness and it decreased with age. One interpretation of this finding is that, because children's physical ability and social responsibility increases with age, they experience less prevention of goal achievement as they develop; thus, prevention of goal achievement decreases with age as a cause of sadness. This prevention as well as the observed cause of being alone may be causes of sadness because they involve the perception of loss.

A number of findings emerged concerning the consequences of sadness. The children's reported infrequently verbalizing their emotions of sadness to others and frequently not showing their sadness at all. Further, apparently when children do exhibit sadness they show it in the form of physical expression, such as "moping around." These findings may be interpreted in two ways with respect to Rogerian theory (1977) and therapy. First, the tendency for children as well as the family to show poor mental health may be due to the lack of children's verbalization of their emotions, such as sadness. Second, Rogerian theory may not be viable for application to children unless their verbalization of emotions is, and can be, increased. It appears that, normally, parents and clinicians must infer emotional state from the children's physical expression.

One significant age difference in the consequences of sadness emerged: Redirective behavior was more frequent in the youngest than in the older children. This pattern can be interpreted using Piaget's (1954/1981) theory of emotional development, with the proposal being that young children experience transient moment emotions. As such, it is likely that young children show quick shifts in their emotional behaviors, such as the shift from sadness to happiness in the redirective behavior. The observed age differences in the consequences of sadness warrant further investigation.

As discussed, there are some methodological issues regarding the questionnaire method we employed. Future researchers could use the present questionnaire procedure with observational methods, restricting potential sadness situations to those that can be observed. Researchers could also assess the consistency between questionnaire and observational data, which would serve to strengthen confidence in the questionnaire method and findings.

References

Averill, J. R. (1974). An analysis of psychophysiological symbolism and its influence on theories of emotion. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior, 4*, 147–190. **http://doi.org/cshjw4**

Averill, J. R. (1978). Anger. *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 26*, 1–80.

Bauer, D. H. (1976). An exploratory study of developmental changes in children's fear. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17*, 69–74. **http://doi.org/bkqc7p**

Cowan, P. A. (1982). The relationship between emotional and cognitive development. *New Directions for Child Development, 16*, 49–81. **http://doi.org/fgdxjf**

Elkind, D. (1967). Egocentrism in adolescence. *Child Development, 38*, 1025–1034. **http://doi.org/ftbbgm**

Elkind, D., & Bowen, R. (1979). Imaginary audience behavior in children and adolescence. *Development Psychology, 15*, 38–44. **http://doi.org/brqcvt**

Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. New York, NY: Norton.

Flavell, J. H. (1977). *Cognitive development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gilbert, D. C. (1969). The young child's awareness of affect. *Child Development, 40*, 629–640. **http://doi.org/d42twh**

Glasberg, R. (1979). Children's understanding of sadness: A developmental approach. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 39*, 4614–4615.

Glasberg, R., & Aboud, F. E. (1981). A developmental perspective on the study of depression: Children's evaluative reactions to sadness. *Developmental Psychology, 17*, 195–202. **http://doi.org/bd2xdt**

Hesse, P., & Cicchetti, D. (1982). Perspectives on an integrated theory of emotional development. *New Directions for Child Development, 16*, 3–48. **http://doi.org/cp9t65**

Knoke, D., & Burke, P. J. (1980). *Log-linear models* (Vol. 20). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Piaget, J. (1954/1981). *Intelligence and affectivity*. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Protinsky, H. O. (1975). Eriksonian ego identity in adolescents. *Adolescence, 10*, 428–432.

Rogers, C. R. (1977). *Carl Rogers on personal power: Inner strength and its revolutionary power*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.

Rotenberg, K. J. (1980). Children's use of intentionality in judgments of character and disposition. *Child Development, 51*, 282–284. **http://doi.org/b332dr**

Rotenberg, K. J. (1982). Development of character constancy of self and other. *Child Development, 53*, 505–515. **http://doi.org/fv6vgd**

Shantz, C. U. (1975). The development of social cognition. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Review of child development research* (Vol. 5, pp. 257–323). Oxford, UK: University of Chicago Press.

Wolman, R. N., Lewis, W. C., & King, M. (1971). The development of the language of emotions: Conditions of emotional arousal. *Child Development, 42*, 1288–1293. **http://doi.org/cnqgwm**

Yarrow, L. J. (1979). Emotional development. *American Psychologist, 34*, 951–957. **http://doi.org/d3w3vb**