Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MSc (University of Victoria, 2013)
BSc (University of Victoria, 2011)

“Young Children’s Domain Coordination and Emotion Attributions in the Context of Mixed Domain Transgressions”

Department of Psychology

Monday, February 26, 2018
11:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B021

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Ulrich Mueller, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Erica Woodin, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Tina Malti, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. William Arsenio, Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Gina Harrison, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Drawing on principles of social domain theory, the current study examined children’s attributions of emotion and moral judgements when interpreting moral and mixed sociomoral transgressions. A goal of the current study was to explore developmental patterns in children’s ability to coordinate their judgements and justifications across the social and moral domains. Links between emotion attributions, domain coordination skills, and externalizing behaviour were also examined as were associations between the above listed variables and perspective taking. Sixty-six typically developing children between the ages of 6- and 10-years were interviewed following the presentation of a moral or mixed moral and social domain vignette. Overall, there was significant variability in responses depending on the type of story. Developmental findings revealed that older children’s moral reasoning was more specific (e.g., “it is unfair to steal”) as opposed to vague (e.g., “it was bad) and other-oriented, and they tended to show a greater capacity to recognize both moral and social components of a mixed domain transgression. Further, as expected, younger children provided a greater number of positive emotion attributions overall. Consistent with the study’s hypotheses, higher numbers of positive emotion attributions were predictive of higher externalizing behaviours. Emotion attributions were not associated with children’s domain coordination scores, apart from one mixed domain story. Additionally, perspective taking scores did not predict children’s domain coordination scores or emotion attributions. Developmental implications are discussed in relation to social domain theory, as are implications of emotional expectancies, types of justifications and externalizing behaviour.