

Judging the Behavior of a Boy Who Suffers from FAS: With&Without Knowledge of the Syndrome

Kubra Sansarlioglu & Zeynep Ilgaz Acar (GL/Psyc2520)York University



© http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/stephanie-knaak/drinking-pregnancy_b_3901853.html

INTRODUCTION

Background:

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is caused by prenatal alcohol exposure, otherwise defined as when a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol levels in the mother's blood stream inhibit the growing child's central nervous system and brain development. The effects of FAS are permanent through life and are commonly misunderstood.

Question:

Does being educated about FAS change our judgment of a misbehaving child who has the condition?

Hypothesis:

People who know the detailed description and the consequences of the syndrome would evaluate any punishment given to the child as inappropriate because they show empathy towards the child and understand the reason of such disturbing behavior.

METHODS & PROCEDURE

Participants

Students (18 to 29 years old) from York University and University of Toronto were recruited: 75 women; 26 men received the information about FAS and 72 women; 26 men did not. Assignment to groups was done randomly.

Materials:

Questionnaire, the Scenarios, along with the Informed consent and debriefing form will be shown.

Procedure

All participants gave informed consent and were invited to contact the authors if they had questions once they did the experiment. All participants read the scenario about the misbehaving child and answered the related questions. Half of the questionnaires were accompanied with information about FAS, and half were not—they were distributed randomly to all participants (double-blind procedure).

ABSTRACT

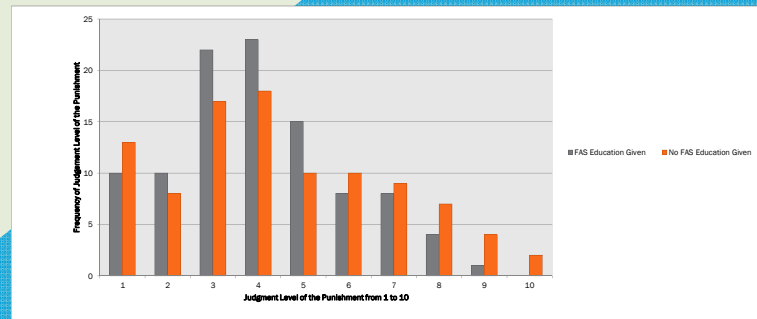
This study aims at evaluating whether having knowledge of FAS and its consequences cause people to judge the disruptive behavior of a diagnosed child differently. It is predicted that being informed about the syndrome will increase empathy towards a diagnosed child. A scenario in which a FAS-diagnosed child gets punished for misbehaving at school was presented to 199 participants—half of them were informed about FAS and the other half were not. All participants rated the appropriateness of the punishment. An independent sample one-tailed t-test shows that results are insignificant. These results were not as predicted. In the discussion section, we pointed out some of the strengths and weaknesses of this study and proposed ideas for future research.



©<http://www.mnprc.org/catalog/minnesota/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder?page=2>

RESULTS

Frequency Distribution Graph for FAS-Education Given and No FAS-Education Given:



The dependent variable that was measured in this study was the student's judgment level of the punishment given to Marcos, measured from 1 to 10. 1 was very inappropriate and 10 being very appropriate. The results are illustrated in the graph above among the FAS education given and No FAS education given. Using an independent-sample, one-tailed t-test, the result was $t(197)=1.37$, $p=0.09$ (0.087). We used a one-tailed t-test in comparing the two groups because; we already had a prediction about the outcome. Hence, we were testing for the possibility of the relationship in one direction. According to our results, the findings are not significant at $p=0.09$. Therefore, providing the information about FAS did not have a significant impact on the student's judgment level of the punishment given to Marcos.



©thebreakfreefoundation

DISCUSSION

Findings imply that the description of FAS was not a remarkable determinant of the evaluation of the punishment as inappropriate. Our study had a high internal validity due to the fact that we kept three variables, which are the participants' gender, major, and age, constant to eliminate the possibility of personal factors affecting the results.

Future research might be designed to address one of the possible threats to the external validity of our study, which is the small sample size. Our sample consisted of 199 participants and they were mostly from university students as well as female participants. Thus, such characteristics of our sample may fail to be representative of the population and may make it difficult to generalize the results to the population level. Follow-up research could use one scenario of a child with the diagnosis of his disorder and the other scenario without the diagnosis to determine whether mentioning the disorder is the main reason of the judgment of the punishment as inappropriate. To conclude, the same experiment may be used to test gender differences in judging the appropriateness of punishment of a diagnosed child.



© <http://pixshark.com/fetal-alcohol-syndrome-newborn.htm>