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Introduction

‘Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour’.(Saul, M.,2019)

Includes many sub-fields of study such areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behaviour and cognitive processes.

The study of mind and behaviour in relation to a particular field of knowledge or activity

It is dedicated to the study of human behaviour – and the thoughts, feelings and motivations behind it.

Erik Erikson theory of psychosocial development

Erik Erikson was an ego psychologist who developed one of the most popular and influential theories of development.

While his theory was impacted by Sigmund Freud's work, Erikson's theory focused on psychosocial development rather than psychosexual development.(Kendra, 2019)

Infancy (0-18m)

Trust vs Mistrust

- This stage starts as soon as a child is born and lasts until the child is 18 months old.
- It focuses on establishing confidence in caregivers and the outside world.
- Children who get appropriate care might acquire hope as a psychological trait.
- According to Erikson, it is the most important period of your child's life, as it shapes their view of the world as well as their overall personality (Cherry, 2021).

Erikson's first of eight stages of psychological development, occurring between birth and 18 months of age. During this period, the newborn either learns to trust other people and himself or herself, or develops a fundamental distrust of his or her surroundings.

The development of basic trust is ascribed to a main caregiver who is sensitive to the infant's specific needs while transmitting the character of trustworthiness, whereas the development of basic distrust is related to neglect, lack of affection, or inconsistent treatment. To fully trust, the infant must first experience both trust and mistrust.

Importance of Trust

- Infants who learn to trust caregivers in infancy are more likely to build trustworthy connections with others later in life
- It is established by reacting to infant's screams immediately and correctly
- Feeding is the most crucial event at this period.
- Erikson believed that affection, comfort and food are essential for the infants to gain trust from their caregivers (Sanford Health News, 2021).

Erikson also referred to infancy as the Oral Sensory Stage (as anybody who has watched a infant put everything in her mouth might), when the mother's positive and loving care for the infant is emphasised, with a strong focus on visual contact and touch.

According to Erikson, the infant will develop trust only if the parent or caregiver is attentive and consistent in meeting the infant's fundamental requirements. The need for care and nourishment must be addressed on a regular basis. The infant must first establish a trusting bond with the parent or caregiver; else, mistrust will emerge.

No infant will ever develop a feeling of complete trust or complete scepticism. Erikson thought that good growth was all about finding a happy medium between two conflicting forces. When this occurs, infants develop hope, which

Erikson defined as an openness to experience balanced by a sense of danger.

Effects of Mistrust in this stage

- ▶ Fearfulness
 - ▶ Confusion
 - ▶ Anxiety
 - ▶ Suspicion
 - ▶ Frustration
 - ▶ Withdrawal
 - ▶ Lack of confidence
- (Mcleod, 2018)



According to Erikson, unhealthy individuals will spend their entire lives striving to deal with the conflicts and obstacles that arise as a result of their inability to progress through an earlier stage or stages.

Failure to cultivate the virtue of hope will result in the growth of dread. The infant will carry a fundamental feeling of distrust into future relationships. It may cause anxiety, increased insecurities, and a general sense of mistrust in the world around them.

Infancy 0-1

Trust vs Mistrust

- ▶ Erikson referred to infancy as the oral sensory stage because he believed that this was the stage where babies feel a mothers positive aura and affection giving care to the child.
- ▶ He believed that visual contact and touch should be emphasised within the nurturing of the child if passed successfully would gain the trust of the child.



Importance of Infancy

- ▶ Erikson believed infancy was very important because babies are very much dependent on their caregivers he believed that how parents interact with their babies has a major effect on their mental health and development.
- ▶ He stated that early patterns of trust that parents give to their child is what builds the foundation of trust that is crucial for their social and emotional development. If this happens the child will feel safe and secure in the environmental world, this is essential as it determines how their personality will be and how they view the world .
- ▶ He also believed the children who develop or learn to trust their caregivers will more likely be able to form trusting relationships with others throughout the course of their life
- ▶ He believed it was important for the caregiver to gain trust by giving the child affection, comfort and food. As at this age the child cannot communicate to the best of their abilities so the caregiver giving the child these few things help maintain and build the key focus of the psychosocial stage.

ERIK ERIKSON'S STAGES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Infancy

Psychosocial Stage - Infancy: A Summary Chart

Age	Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Hope

Infancy: Birth to 18 Months

- ▶ Erikson also referred to infancy as the Oral Sensory Stage (as anyone might who watches a baby put everything in her mouth) where the major emphasis is on the mother's positive and loving care for the child, with a big emphasis on visual contact and touch. If we pass successfully through this period of life, we will learn to **trust** that life is basically okay and have basic confidence in the future. If we fail to experience trust and are constantly frustrated because our needs are not met, we may end up with a deep-seated feeling of worthlessness and a **mistrust** of the world in general.
- ▶ Not surprisingly, the most significant relationship is with the maternal parent, or whoever is our most significant and constant caregiver.
- ▶ Incidentally, many studies of suicides and suicide attempts point to the importance of the early years in developing the basic belief that the world is trustworthy and that every individual has a right to be here.

Critical Evaluation

- ▶ By extending the notion of personality development across the lifespan, Erikson outlines a more realistic perspective of personality development (McAdams, 2001).
- ▶ The theory does not have a universal mechanism for crisis resolution.
- ▶ His concept is more a descriptive evaluation of human social and emotional improvement that does not accurately explain how or why this improvement happens.
- ▶ Erikson does not give an explanation for how the final results of one psychosocial degree influences a person at a later stage.

The stage represents the infancy period that is the time period between the birth to one year which is the most fundamental stage of the entire lifespan. In this stage, the infant is totally dependent and the development of trust is based on the quality and dependability of the caregivers of the child (Orenstein and Lewis, 2020). The child develops trust for the adult who makes them feel safe and secured. But if a caregiver fails at this and is inconsistent and emotionally unavailable the child develops the feeling of mistrust for them. The development of trust is important at this stage as this would make the child feel safe and secure. The failure in the development of trust will lead to development of fear and will enable the child to think that the world is unpredictable and inconsistent. According to Erikson, no child develops 100% trust or 100% mistrust. The successful development is based on the balance between two opposing sides (Jones and Waite-Stupiansky, 2017).

Strengths, Weakness and Practical Applications of the theory

- ❑ **Strengths**: Wide framework represent lifespan, social nature of human being, evidences supports Erikson's ideas.
- ❑ **Weaknesses**: No exact mechanism of resolving conflicts and movement from one stage to another (Cherry, 2021).
- ❑ **Practical Application**: By health care practitioners to analyse patient's symptomatic behaviour (Darling-Fisher, 2019).

One of the strengths of Erikson's theory it's ability to tie together important psychosocial development across the entire lifespan. Allows to focus on the social nature of human being and illustrate how social relationship influences development.

Describes a wide structure for viewing the development through the lifespan of the individual.

Weakness- The theory also failed to explain the type of experiences that are needed at each stage for successfully solving the conflicts and efficiently progressing to next step (Cherry, 2021).

The theory can be applied for the healthcare

practitioners as it helps in analysing the symptomatic behaviour of the patient with respect to the traumatic past experiences that they had and the struggles that they face in present development of tasks (Darling-Fisher, 2019).

Conclusion

This first stage of psychosocial development consists of:

- ▶ Psychosocial Conflict: Trust versus mistrust
- ▶ Major Question: "Can I trust the people around me?"
- ▶ Basic Virtue: Hope
- ▶ Important Event: Feeding

The trust versus mistrust stage serves as a foundation of development. The outcomes of this stage can have effects that influence the rest of an individual's life.

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