

Assignment Number One

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Developmental Psychology Theories in Late Adulthood



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Introduction

This essay aims to explore the psychological development of late adulthood, with the aid of Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial development stages of human development and the disengagement theory. The emotions, behaviour and cognition of late adulthood, will be also explored. Three research articles relating to health and social care that are relevant to psychology will be selected and discussed.

The late adulthood group of people are a group of people who are respected in society due to their wisdom. The fact that they have a lot of experience which they are normally willing to share, their knowledge is often respected. It is very important that the late adulthood group feel wanted and needed. This is because if this is not apparent to them there is a possibility of them keeping quiet and feeling left out. Lally and Valentine-French (2019) explain 'that the ageing process varies from individual to individual and from one organ to another, however, organs such as the kidneys become less efficient'

Developmental psychology is a very wide subject and deals with the development of individuals. Late adulthood is an age in which individuals are at the stage of their life where they want peace and tranquillity. It is a time for reflection and helping to give back to society. This is the time where individuals tend to slow down and think of imparting knowledge and wisdom to the younger generation. Parisi et al (2009) 'wise individuals are often seen as knowledgeable, mature, tolerant, empathetic, experienced and demonstrate exceptional judgement.'

Erikson's Psychosocial development theory

This development theory describes late adulthood as individuals that are of the age of sixty and above. It is known as the old stage period and the ego integrity vs despair. The integrity comes to play when people in the late adulthood are able to reflect and feel that they have lived a productive and fulfilled their dreams and aspirations. Despair takes place when there is regret that some aspirations and

desires have not been achieved. 'Conflict comes to play at this stage of the individual's life Orenstein (2020)'. Although this developmental theory lays great emphasis on the psychosocial aspect of individuals development. It was greatly influenced by Sigmond Freud; it is not a psychosexual theory. The late adulthood, are people that have retired and are able to give advice to younger individuals as they have lived life for a while.

The old-age stage, are people that are able to discuss the past wars and events that have happened in the past. These groups of people are prone to getting illnesses such as heart diseases and mental illnesses such as dementia. It is at this stage of an individual's life, regret and sorrow may occur, when they reflect upon their life and realise there are things they would have wanted to achieve when they were younger.

Disengagement Theory

This is a theory which is associated with the elderly, it explains that when adults get to this stage of their lives it is not uncommon for people to become less social and tend not to want to engage in social activities any longer. They tend to become less active as regards the activities of daily living. They no longer participate in what they used to do such as public activities and tend to slow down generally. The elderly prefer, to deal with a very close and limited amount of people, such as their immediate family and close friends. The disengagement theory was created by Elaine Cumming and Warren Earl Henry (Crossman 2019). This is one of the first theories that was related to the elderly and was created by scientists.

Fox et al (2017) state that the lack of engagement in the elderly could be due to various reasons such as lack of interest and lack of knowledge. The fact that at this age normally there are quite a few health issues, directly relating to their age tends to make the elderly less interested to explore and carry out new activities.

CliffiNotes (2003) explains that the disengagement theory believes ageing allows older adults to voluntarily slow down by retiring as it is expected by society. At this age there is a thin line that can be easily crossed as ageism can easily be experienced with these groups of people. It is easy to assume that due to their age and physical

limitation, a lot of things which other groups of people would be included in, the late adulthood group of people would be left out. At this stage of people's lives, they become more isolated and less interested with life in general. (Psychosocial Development in Late Adulthood 2020).

Emotions

When considering the emotions of late adulthood, it could be stated that at this stage of their lives they become very sensitive as they are aware that they are not as able and productive as they used to be when they were young. Some of them are aware that they are beginning to experience memory loss which is quite disturbing to them.

Dury (2014) explains that elderly people are more likely to be lonely and not to relate with the rest of society, it is also not uncommon for them to have various health issues which further does affect them and could be directly related to loneliness. Forrest-Lytle and Dadashazar (2016) argue that the late adulthood group of people do suffer from a decline in language processing and working memory. The elderly often suffer from memory loss, which makes them very frustrated and causes a lot of confusion.

The elderly are more likely to experience loss of close associates such as childhood friends or their significant others. Shrivastava (2013) supports this idea, and state that the elderly are prone to have a high level of illnesses which are long term, limitations to movement and diseases affecting their mental state, which can sometimes become very frustrating and could make them feel that they are becoming a burden to the people around them

Behaviour

The behaviour of individuals that are at the stage of late adulthood, could be sometimes difficult and unpredictable, this is because as they grow older, their attitudes and habits change, for example a lady who when in her forty used to bath once a day, when she is in her eighty may decide that she would rather have two baths

a day. Sometimes this causes conflicts as the carers may have to wake up at early hours of the mornings to carry out this task. The fact that these groups of people are not able to carry out such basic tasks causes them to become depressed and sometimes leads to resenting the people that are around them. Rudert et al (2020) explain that older adults increasingly limit their social network to a few close persons who provide emotional support and are less likely to ostracize them.

Cognition

Chang et al (2020) Took part in a global research as regard the elderly being treated differently due to their age, the result showed that the elderly were directly affected when it comes to worse health outcomes. Late adulthood does come with its limitations and challenges, when considering the cognition of these group of people, it could be stated that as people become elder, their cognitive decline, rapidly for example the ability to act quickly and agile in a flight of fright situation diminishes considerably, due to coordination declining and also the ability to think fast and react in an agile manner.

Ennis (2013) stipulates that Older adults need more environmental support to initiate strategic memory behaviours. Mobility becomes an issue as they may be suffering from joint pain that will limit them greatly. It is also very common for individuals in this age group to suffer from dementia which allows such people to become very aggressive, and act out of character, this should not be taken personally as it is most of the time beyond their control. Ayalon and Tesch-Romer (2017) argue that 'old age is a complicated issue which involves cognitive, behavioural, and emotional issues

Research Article 1

Young People with Left-Behind Experiences In Childhood have Higher Levels of Psychological Resilience Lang et al (2017)

This research article explored the development of psychological capital and its relevance with adult attachment in Chinese college students, with left-behind experiences at a young age. The participants of this study came from three

universities in China who volunteered to participate. The outcome of the research demonstrated that out of 726 individuals of the participants, 281 participants had left-behind experiences and 445 participants did not have left-behind experiences.

Research Article 2

Psychological distress in patients with obstructive sleep apnoea: The role of hostility and coping self-efficacy; Timkova, et al (2018)

The paper discussed whether hostility and coping self-efficacy are associated with psychological distress in obstructive sleep apnoea patients. It was also trying to discover if there was a relationship between hostility and psychological distress. 150 participants took part in the study and the ages of the participants were between the age of 18 – 65 years old. 68% of the patients were male a total of 44.7% were obese and 49.3% had severe obstructive sleep apnoea. The result showed that the presence of psychological distress in those participants that suffer from obstructive sleep apnoea but it was also stated that this was not only the reason, hostility and how patients cope with their disease could have a part to play.

Research Article 3

Psychological and Mental Illness Among Elder Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union SVETLANA et al (2006)

This is an observational study that involved elderly participants from the former Soviet Union. The subjects that were involved in this study, were from an adult day-care centre of more than one hundred and 20% were from the former Soviet Union. The private adult care provided the therapeutic and social services from about eighty to one hundred elders in the community. and senior housing. There were twenty - three key reporters and ten general reporters. The participants were observed for four hours a week for three and a half months. The findings of the study showed a direct relationship between a change in the social and cultural view of mental illness and how it is preserved.

Conclusion

This essay has discussed the late adulthood group of people. Two psychological theories, Erikson's Psychosocial development theory, and Disengagement Theory were focused upon. The cognition, behaviour, and emotions of the late adulthood group of people were discussed. Three research papers relating to health and social care were discussed and its relevance to health care was also highlighted. This academic essay has demonstrated how the late adulthood group of people could be left out from the rest of the society as it is assumed that at this age people disengage with the outside world. An assumption is often made that the late adulthood group of people would not want to relate with the outside world hence not make an effort to include them socially. The fact that health issues become a reality in the late adulthood group further complicates issues.

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