

Application of psychological theories to health and social care practice: Critical Discussion

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Introduction

In science, theories are groups of assumptions and propositions formed to explain specific facts in the world and can be confirmed using repeated observations or experiments. Health and social care practice have several theories formulated by different scholars on different phenomena (Parker, J. et al. 2006). Mental health theories explain development socially, psychologically, behaviourally, and physically. The major formulated approaches in human evolution are cognitive theory, ecological system theory, behaviourism theory, bio-psychosocial theory, Erickson's psychosocial theory, and psychoanalytic theory.

The human development complexity has attracted the investigations and perspectives behind various natures and principles that could apply in every development domain. Further and most importantly, these theories have helped get a large pool of information that has helped find new information and provide facts with pieces of evidence from scholars (Walker, J. et al. 2012). The development theories like Bradford theory of behaviour and Erik Erickson aspects of psychosocial development guide health intervention and future applications of the ideas.

Theories

Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Erickson is one of the ego psychologies founders that have emphasized the role of ego being part of someone's identity. According to Erickson, a child's environment is vital in providing growth, self-awareness, self-identity, and adjustment (Syed, M., and McLean, K., 2017). His development discussions avoid mentioning age but primarily refer to prolonged adolescence, leading to more studies on the adolescent stage and adulthood named emerging adulthood. Erickson's development theory entails many things with crisis from previous steps. Also, each stage has positive and negative conflicts and impacts an individual during development. Hence, each phase has its role in human development.

The first stage of Erickson's theory has hope, trust, and mistrust. That is the age between two years from birth, and it emphasizes the basic needs an infant requires that lead to trust and distrust. According to Erik, trust is essential in an individual's trustworthiness (Widick, C. et al. 1978). Infants depend on their mothers, especially for comfort and sustenance. Hence, the child's understanding of the world will come from society and parents interacting with the child. If the parents display sufficient affection, warmth, and affection to the infant, the child will be trustful compared to the one who received little regularity. Development of mistrust can cause withdrawal, frustrations, and lack of confidence.

The second stage in Erickson's theory entails shame, doubt, and autonomy. According to this theory, as a child notices their motor abilities and control normal functioning, they discover their surroundings. Even if the parents still give comfort and security, the child wants to explore everything independently (Gross, Y. 2020). The role of the parents is to offer encouragement and patience that will help boost the independence of their child. Additionally, the parents should be cautious because children may encounter dangerous things that affect their health and safety.

The third stage of Erickson's theory has initiative and guilt. This is the age between four years and five years. At this age, children can easily accomplish many tasks on their own. In some instances, the child may develop negative behaviours due to frustration when not achieving certain things (Syed, M. and McLean, K., 2017). In such cases, the child becomes aggressive and ruthless to the parents and other kids. At the age of three to six years, the development of courage and independence set, especially in preschoolers. At this stage, children face many challenges and a sense of judgment. They learn to handle things on their own that prepares them for leadership roles. Notably, this stage includes risk-taking behaviours like riding a bicycle and crossing the roads independently or unaided.

The other stage of Erickson's theory entails industry and inferiority. It aims to be a formative stage as children aged five to twelve years are more aware of themselves. They start being responsible and cooperate with adults in doing logical and practical tasks. Also, the children can master time and space concepts. They can accomplish and learn so much like reading and writing and additionally get moral values, individual differences, and cultural differences. At the last stage of this theory, a child is at the age of thirteen to nineteen years, also referred to as an adolescent stage (World Health Organization (WHO), 2017). This stage has confusion, especially in identity, as the child develops physically and emotionally. Adolescents need to re-establish themselves and create boundaries from the external environment. It is also a stage that prepares a child for the later stages of life called adulthood. Adulthood has three steps the young, middle, and late adulthood.

Bradford's Brown Theory of Behaviour

Psychology theories give a good understanding of human behaviour, developments, and thoughts. The broad interpretation of why and how makes humans understand themselves better and others (Crain, 1980). Additionally, theories act as the basis of future research by other or the same scholars. Unlike other scholars, Bradford emphasises adolescent changes and decisions as part of human development. His theory highlights the responsibilities and

challenges across an individual at this stage, the central age group that brings an individual to adulthood. According to Bradford, understanding adolescence is critical because it differs across societies. This stage of rapid development is accompanied by various changes in the community, technology, family, and peers, which leads to inclined changes (Brown, B. and Prinstein, M. 2011). It also comes with new cognitive abilities, physical capacities, reproductive abilities, and other roles in the community. Consequently, it also has complex roles as adults in society, which delays being a complete adult.

Role of Health Care Practitioners

As a health and social care learner and practitioner, I would use Erickson's theory of human psychosocial development to give a health framework in self-management in older adults. Self-management is a process that depends on skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and evaluations (Grady, P. and Gough, L. 2014). This involves partnering with healthcare providers and implementing plans. For example, self-management is most important to older adults prone to chronic illness and injuries from falls (Clayton, V. 1975). According to the management institute, self-management is one of the most vital areas in improving healthcare quality in the United Kingdom because of the high number and chronic illnesses associated with increased healthcare costs. Hence, self-management is effective as an intervention in care planning. Erickson's work emphasises the principles of epigenesis that unfold what happens in an individual's life throughout life, the nature of the process, and its influence in the later stages of life. Nevertheless, Erickson's theory encourages self-management during declines in cognitive abilities and physical health rather than allowing professionals and families to care for them (Schulman-Green et al., 2012). In older adults, health coaching and primary care interventions have improved the number of health and clinical outcomes for chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes.

Bradford's theory is easy to understand and apply in the adolescent age groups. For example, for teenagers visiting a clinic, it is easier for me as a practitioner who understands the theory to manage the teenagers well because I fully understand the stage identity and role confusion in that stage (Russell, S. et al. 2009). The inability to form good relationships with my clients and less understanding of their conditions can cause further complications. Also, I can help a law practitioner use Bradford's psychosocial development theory to develop a holistic judgment in juvenile justice.

Application of Theory on Future Career

According to Erik, all individuals are shaped by a series of differences called development crises. They occur during childhood and adolescence; hence, in the future, I can educate teachers to understand this crisis and understand their students better to improve learning (Haber, D. 2006). I will also help teachers create individualised education programs (IEP) to help students with deficits or disorders reach their learning goals (Bateman, B. and Herr, C. 2011). The IEP can help teachers weigh goals and expectations of how the students' behaviours can be changed to help them achieve their goals every academic year. The programs should be tailored to cater to the needs of students with disabilities and dysfunctions with the legal participation of parents towards the same.

Bradford's theory is vital as it has provided me with a better understanding of adolescent development. This understanding will help me manage individuals at this stage of their lives and help them make better decisions. Additionally, adolescent behaviours and decisions significantly impact social and mental health. The perspectives on gender roles, religion, career aspirations, and educational goals can influence substantially decisions made in the future and opportunities. His theory would guide my interventions and future applications on family life, recreation, mental health, consumer science, juvenile justice, and civic management.

Conclusion

Development involves creating human capabilities in groups and societies. The theories broadly distribute material foundations for human functioning like skills, wealth, and healthcare. It also incorporates sustainable mechanisms like consumption, production, and decision-making. Hence, these theories provide frameworks for understanding human growth and learning.

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