

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

**Applying Psychological perspectives in Health and
Social Care
Assignment 1**

Module: Psychology for Health and Social Care

Module code: BMSW4003

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Table of Contents

Introduction:	3
Developmental Psychology:	3
Periods of development:.....	3
Domains of development:.....	3
Infancy – time to birth	3
Infancy time to development	4
Infancy - personality or not	6
Infancy in the light of Psychoanalysis.....	7
Infancy in present research	7
Reference:.....	9

Introduction:

This report aims to introduce us to the sequence of the development of the infant life stage as part of life. According to the theories about psychosocial development.

Developmental Psychology:

Developmental psychology is the scientific study of how human being change over their life. Especially it concerned with infants and children and it looks at how they thinking, feeling and behavioural throughout persons life (Stroebe, 2011).

Periods of development:

- Prenatal period: from conception to birth
- Infancy and toddlerhood : birth to 2 years old
- Early childhood: 2-6 years old
- Middle childhood: 6-12 years old
- Adolescence: 12-19 years old

Domains of development:

Development is described in three domains, but growth in one influence the other domains.

Physical Domain – body size, body proportions, appearance, brain development, motor development, perception capacities, physical health.

Cognitive Domain – thought processes and intellectual abilities including attention, memory, problem solving, imagination, academic and every day knowledge, metacognition and language (Kok at al.,2016).

Social, emotional domain – self-knowledge (self-esteem, metacognition, sexual identity, ethnic identity), moral reasoning, understanding and expression of emotions, self-regulation, temperament, understanding others, interpersonal skills and friendship.

Infancy – time to birth

Among these stages of life, infancy has given an indispensable significance with respect to the foremost developmental features that it carries. This is considered as one of the most important stage with respect to the development in different areas which can be social, cognitive, emotional, physical and psychological areas of life.

Infancy is regarded as the stage of human lifespan which occupies the age from birth till 2 years of age. Right after an infant is born, he signifies his senses as to functional by crying. This cry is known as anxious cry signifies anxiety that an infant has been through during the time of birth causing birth trauma as Otto Frank, a psychoanalyst, centred his theory of birth trauma as first trauma human experiences caused by abrupt separation from mother womb and sudden exit from comforting environmental to the hostile surrounding (Kok et al., 2016).

This anxious cry then turns into a light hearted wimp when an infant is put immediate closer to mother's chest. The warmth of that region causes the child to reduce that anxiety and it would then let the child to be at rest. All of that happens because of the association the child has made with mother at the time of stay at the mother's womb. According to the theory of attachment by Harry Harlow, this association is called attachment.

Infancy time to development

Harlow carried about an experiment in which he demonstrated that a caregiver who provides warmth is of foremost significance to the infant than the caregiver who would just provide food. Moving, an infant carries few significant reflexes which are inborn, these include reflex to suck, reflex to feel pain, reflex to cry, reflex to respond on mother's voice and warmth of her body. These are called neonatal reflexes. Apart from these, many of the physiological reflexes are also neonatal in infants which include hiccupping, swallowing, blinking, grasp reflex, Moro reflex. These are more elaborated in the neurological and medical science. And not in the last place is the reflex called smile (Kok et al., 2016).

Infant starts smiling between 6 to 12 weeks but it has been notice that infants do smirk after they born. This is called reflex smile. This tends to happen as a result of facial muscle contraction. The smile stops around 2 months after birth and it a time where an infants social smile is expected to happen. This is a smile which happens as a response to something external such as mother's voice or seeing father. This smile can be encouraged by plenty of love, playing with them or mimicking smile face. This social smile signifies that the baby's vision and facial recognition is improving and they are outgrowing their early reflexes. This is a time where they begin to experience emotions. After baby has smiled down, he starts cooing which

lately becomes giggle that eventually launches as a laughing bomb. During these times, their personalities are begun to evolve which include their cognitive association, their emotional wellbeing, their moral development, their attachment style with the caregiver. Jean Piaget has given an extensive elaboration on the cognitive development of infants which is called sensorimotor intelligence (LeVine, 2010).

This phase has got stages with in it. During the first two stages, the infant begins to focus on his own body. This is during the first month of life. This is a time where reflexive actions are used to react to the world. Whereas, during the second stage, infants begins to adapt to the environment as the child begins to avoid discomfort and this is during 4 months of development. Then comes the third stage which last from 4 to 8 months of development. In this stage, the infant begins to repeat actions to see what effect it might bring such as shaking a rattle. In this stage, the child is also starting to interact with others. Then comes fourth stage which lasts from 8 to 12 months. It is time where child begins to anticipate and adapt to the upcoming events. Stage five and six are the stages of experiment (LeVine, 2010).

In these stages the child begins to discover the world and these stages last for 24 months of development. When it comes to development of language in infants, at around 6 months, infants begin to babble such as 'nanana' or 'gagaga'. These can be called the precursors to the language and gradually these sounds are used to retain. At around 12 months of age, the child uses holophrastic speech such as mum which means 'water' or 'ju' which means 'juice'. These holophrases are eventually turned into meaningful words such as mama or doggie. During the age of 2 years, the child begins to use meaningful vocabulary comprises of 3 to 5 words such as 'where is my bag? Or this is a cat'. These are called telegraphic speech. Infancy is considered as most important stage of life because this is a time where a child attachment style determines how he will be attaching to the people later in his life therefore, these attachment styles are of foremost importance. These include secure attachment in which child receives care and affection early in life. This leads to trust and curiosity as depicted in the Erickson's psycho social stage of development for infants (trust vs mistrust).

This trust comes from secure attachment which gives a child confidence and secure. Another attachment style is called insecure resistant in which inconsistency in Care May send the message that his needs are not being met. This makes child clingy and worry. The other attachment style is called insecure avoidant in which child does not seek comfort from others. The child is neither clingy not secured. This child can be uncomfortable with closeness. This is the least common attachment style and was described after the interaction between mothers with schizophrenia and their child. Social care development can actually impact many other forms of development a child experience. Health and social care development can help child to develop language skills and the ability to interact with other children allows for more opportunities to practice and learn speech and language skills. Infancy turns out as foremost as well as delicate stage of life as if the early experiences being faced by infants cause a legitimate effect on the rest of the stages of life. This means that if child has experienced distrust during his early experience then it is probable that he feels distress when initializing a relationship in the later stages of lifespan (LeVine, 2010).

Infancy - personality or not

The attachment styles show cultural variations so it suggests that cultural expectations find their way in parenting practise and attachment style. According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, an infant falls onto the preconventional stage of morality in which an infant is oriented towards what is right and what is wrong. This is called right and wrong orientation determined by punishment and rewards. An infant considers something right as to being rewarded for and something wrong as to being punished for. Another important area of development in infancy is to discuss which is called personality development. Infants are not born with personalities but they do possess temperaments which is refer to as inborn behavioural tendency. Regardless of whether your baby is a boy or a girl, an attention seeker or an avoidant, your parenting may make a big difference during his or her growth (Pitts & Philips, 2018).

There is still no 'right' way to handle the situation, it is a learning as you go process. But one thing is certain-your steady love is the most vital factor in causing of the baby's self and persona. Generating a healthy connection to the baby, if something is going for each other or responding directly with your baby's screams, will enable a

strong relationship to establish. An independent thinker will show signs of inquisitiveness but are much more mindful about development. A set of genes and the atmosphere impact your baby's propensity towards an introspective or domineering personality. Realize the personality type on your baby and adjust your style of parenting to enhance it. These are the consistent patterns of relating to others and situations. These are not shaped by parenting but these are recognized by other later as particular traits such as a baby whose behaviour can be predicted is viewed as good and nice versa. The dimensions of temperament have been used to derive temperamental types which include easy child who shows adaptability to the environment, difficult child who reacts intensely to changes in the environment and slow to warm up child who withdraws from others and may dislike disruptions in the environment (Schnittker & McLeod, 2015).

Infancy in the light of Psychoanalysis

Apart from these theories, famous psychoanalyst called Sigmund Freud and Erik Erickson have depicted infancy in their particular view. Freud discussed infancy in his psychosexual stage of development in which he associated infancy with deriving pleasure from oral activities such as sucking and children like to put anything in their mouth whereas Erickson showed the significance of infancy in the first stage of his psychosocial theory of development in which trust vs mistrust stage is associated with infant in which if a baby is consistently taken care of then he would develop a sense of trust and vice versa (Stroebe, 2011).

Infancy in present research

Considering Erickson's theory, it can be said that seemingly a trivial act of parenting may cause an irreversible effect on child in terms of attachment. This has always been tested with regard to parental conflict and infant behavioural pattern and significant result have been found out. A research study conducted by Institute of developmental psychology, a normal university, UK in 2017 and it was found out that interpersonal conflict between parents have been associated with infant's problem behaviour, especial externalize problem in infants have increased over time. This suggests that early interpersonal relationships context are relevant for infant adjustment, asserting attachment theory (Wolff, 2016).

Another research study conducted by the University in UK which it was found out that parental sensitivity is affecting infant's cognitive development which includes primary effects, carry forward effects, spill over effect and transactional effects across parents and children. The validity of these theories with regard to infancy has been tested time to time. At last, it can be asserted that infancy is a stage of lifespan which is baseline in terms of emotional, cognitive, social, physical and psychological development to the rest of the stages of lifespan. It is highly acknowledgeable to conduct modern researches with regard to innovation in the field of medical treatment among infants and psychotherapy among parent and infants for the better care of infants. However, those infants who are born with physically or mentally impairments need to be taken care equitably or even more (Wolff, 2016).

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