

Level: 4

CERTIFICATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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INTRODUCTION

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. This involves the biological influences, social pressures, and environmental factors that affect how people think act, and feel. Gaining this understanding of psychology can help people achieve insights into their actions and better understand other people (Oxford, 2021). Psychology is a multifaceted discipline and includes many sub-fields of study such as areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behavior and cognitive processes (McLeod, 2019).

What is Infancy?

Infancy is the first year of life and is the period of most rapid growth after birth. As a toddler, humans develop motor skills, such as walking and communication skills. (Lindenberger, 2001)

WHAT IS INFANCY DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Infant developmental psychology discourses significant stages of infant development from conception to age 2. This is the time when growth is rapid, and consequences of neglect so damaging, that many believes this to be the most important stages of a person's life. Those working in the field of Developmental Psychology and who study infants, research the following key components of human growth and development and group it into three (3) stages which are Cognitive growth, linguistic acquisition, social and emotional development.(Allpsychologycareers.com,2022)

Cognitive Growth

Cognitive Growth is the first stage of human development, whereby they learn information through their senses, e.g. sight and sound. (Csibra et al, 2002).

Cognitive development refers to the learning process of infants through memory, language and thinking (Thorton, 2002). From birth, babies begin to actively learn and are aware of their surroundings. For example, they engage in activities such as playing games and by performing simple acts like picking up a toy. As babies get older they can imitate actions and understand simple words. They begin to interact with people by copying behaviours. These experiences can stimulate their growing minds and enhance their cognitive development.

Babies process information differently as they get older and learn new things. For example, parents can improve their baby's cognitive development by being vocal when presenting new information. Simple actions such as bathing their toddler, and explaining how this helps you feel clean and nice, would link the two ideas together. Babies would then associate bathing with an act that is done to cleanse yourself. Jean Piaget (1896-1080) pioneered the grand "cognitive theory" that psychologist continue to reference today to understand how children actively use sensory inputs to learn how to think ([Allpsychologycareers.com,2022](https://www.allpsychologycareers.com/2022))

Traditionally It was believed that infants were incapable of sensing their environment, as there was a notion that babies were blind at birth. However recent studies have shown that new born infants are excellent discriminators of taste and smell, as they have the ability to detect their own mother's odour. (Lipsitt, 2021)

Cognitive development is a unique process specific to each infant. Many factors effect cognitive development, including genes, events during pregnancy or birth, and aspects of the child's environment. Not only do babies grow physically during the first 2 years of life, but also cognitively (mentally). Infants thinking skills develop as they interact with the world and people around them. A major development during the infancy stage is that babies are aware of object permanence, which suggests that they understand that something exists even if it can't be seen. Though before babies believed that when something moved from their sight, it no longer exists. However, through games such as "Peek-a-boo", babies learn that objects continue to exist even when they are unable to see as it reappears shortly after.

Emotional and Social Development

Emotional and social development of an infants during the first years of life can be thrilling and fascinating. Emotion could be referred to as distinct feelings or traits of consciousness that are appealing and openly displayed. As babies bond with their parents and caregivers, their interactions become more personal and engaging (Healthwise Staff, 2020). Emotion of an infant could range from happiness, sad, anger, excitement, surprise, interest and disgust. Because they cannot communicate through speeches at this particular stage, they communicate through their behavioral reaction like crying, laughing, smiling, widened eyes and rounded mouth to name but few.

Crying

One of the common emotional development of a baby or an infant is the crying. This is usual exhibited during the first three to five months after birth. Although reason for crying may be varied per child, but most common reasons are when the baby is hungry; when baby is feeling pain, for example male child circumcision; absent of caregiver, in the hands of unfamiliar face to name but few.

Smiling

Around ages 2 to 3 months, infant started showing a spontaneous “social smile”. According to research, this is a sign that your baby brain development is advancing and their communication skills are on track. By encouraging your baby to smile, you’re helping them develop self-esteem and letting them know that their feelings are important and can affect their surroundings (American Academy of Pediatrics,2021)

Laughing

Most babies began to laugh between 3 months to 4 months. This can occur when making a funny face, kissing their tommy or making some funny noise or singing. Laughing could be considered as one of the fundamental milestone for a baby as it is a form of communication to the caregiver in an amusing way as compare to crying.

Anger

Anger is usually exhibited when the baby is around 6 months old. One common way in which infant vent their frustration is by restricting their movement. If babies want to free and cannot, this often result in desperate cries as a sign of anger. In some cases, some babies have heightened sensory sensitivities that can lead to angry responses. For example, too loud or harsh sound can frustrate them (Honig,2021).

Fear

Fear, one of our core emotions, is a basic part of being human. But in modern times, we often wonder if panic and anxiety are becoming more of a roadblock to thriving than an aid to surviving (Schultz, 2019). Babies started to exhibited fear from the first to the fifth months after birth and Some common fears can include loud noises, falling, separation from parents, and in presence

of a strangers. During this stage it difficult for babies to distinguish between objects accurately enough to be scared by just looking at them (Tantry,2020).

In conclusion, the infancy stage is so crucial and one of the most important and even quick stages of developments. Often parents say infants develop so fast they must cherish the moments and enjoy the process. They are learning something new every day that also changes the perception of the parents and they too start noticing things in a new manner. Infants must be cared for with love, nutrition and attention and should not be limited to anything that restricts their growth (Infancy, n.d.)

LIFE SPAN THEORY SIGMUND FREUD'S PSYCHOSEXUAL THEORY

Sigmund Freud was born on May 6, 1856, in Czechoslovakia. Died 23 September 1939 in London. Founder of psychoanalysis (Martin 2021). Freud could be referred to as one of the most misunderstood scholar in the field of psychology because his theories are often being dismissed out of hand by psychologists and non-psychologists because they believed his theories are unscientific. Freud's creation of PSYCHOANALYSIS is expository, encouraging understanding rather than scientific proof. He can be best understood when you follow the evaluation of his ideas as they developed in response to clinical and theoretical problems (Sandler J, Et al, 1997).

Freud believed that personality development in childhood takes place during five (5) psychosexual stages namely, **Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latency** and **Genital stages**. According to Freud, each stages expressed a sexual energy (libido) in different ways and through different parts of the body. Freud believed that life was built around tension and pleasure. He also asserts that all tension was due to the build-up of the libido (sexual energy) and that all pleasure came from the discharge (McLeod, 2019).

Oral Stage (Birth to 1 year)

In oral stage, the libido is centered in the baby's mouth. This is the stage where the baby gets much satisfaction from putting all sorts of things in his/her mouth to satisfy the libido. It is because of this sexual urge why babies are mouth oriented, such as sucking, biting, and breastfeeding. Freud also believes that oral stimulation could lead to an oral fixation in later life. Oral personalities can be easily identified around us such as smokers, finger-chewers, nail-biters and thumb suckers. Most of these are exhibited subconsciously or particular under stressful situations.

Anal Stage (1 to 3 years)

According to Freud, as the name implies the anal stage in the psychosexual development is where the child gets great pleasure from defecating. It is in this stage that the psychosexual development is pointed on the anus. At this stage, the child is fully aware of their own right and wishes which can bring them into conflict with the demand of the outside world. Freud believed that this type of conflict comes with authority from their parents on when and where they can defecate. With this type of conflict with authority, this can determine the child's future relationship with all forms of authority.

Phallic Stage (3 to 6 years)

The phallic stage is the third stage of the psychosexual development wherein the infant's libido centers upon their genitalia as the erogenous zone. The child becomes aware of the anatomical sex differences, which sets in motion the conflict between erotic attraction, resentment, rivalry, jealousy and fear which Freud called Oedipus complex in boys and the Electra complex in girls (McLeod, 2019).

Latency Stage (6 years to puberty)

According to Freud, this is the fourth stage of psychosexual development that the libido becomes dominant. No further psychosexual development takes place at this stage. It is believed that the child energy is pointed at friendship, hobbies and school work.

Genital Stage (puberty to adult)

This is the last stage of Freud's psychosexual development. It begins at puberty where an individual can settle down in one-on-one relationship with another person on the opposite sex. Sexual drive is directed to heterosexual (a person sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex) pleasure rather than self-pleasure like the phallic stage of psychosexual development.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF FREUD PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Strength

- Freud's introduction and thorough explanation of the three major system of personality that is the id, the ego, and the superego on how all three system collaborate in the development of personality prepared the way for the growth of other theories as his work served as a baseline for other theorist to expand upon.
- Freud's theory helped us to understand that our childhood experiences can impact our lives when we grow up as adults.
- Freud was the first to highlights the importance of childhood in mental health and this is an idea extensively used today,
- It also explores the inmate drives that motivate our behaviour.

Weaknesses

- Many believes that his theory is either bad science or not science at all and that using this theory for psychological treatment is unethical
- Neglect of individual differences when treating patients (David, 2021).
- Critics claim that some therapists who are doing the psychoanalysis therapy are not helping patients recover repressed memories, instead they are planting false memories into patient's minds

Limitation

Many Psychologist believed that Freud's theories of psychosexual development is good at explaining but not in predicting behavior which is one of the fundamental pillars of science. This mean that Freud theory cannot be proved neither rebutted because the libido in which he builds his premise is difficult to test and measure objectively. It is also believed that Freud may have only paid attention to what supported his theories and give a blind eye to those information or data that may say otherwise.

CONCLUSION

Sigmund Freud's theories and work helped shape our views of childhood, personality, memory, sexuality and therapy. Other major thinkers have contributed work that grew out of Freud's legacy, while others developed new theories in opposition to his ideas. (Cherry, 2020)

ROLE OF HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS

Health care practitioners play an integral role in improving access to quality health care for the sick, aged, physically challenged persons, and the general population at large. They provide essential services that promote health, prevent diseases and deliver health care services to individuals, families and communities based on the primary health care approach (WHO website, 2022)

According to the American Medical Association (AMA), a healthcare professional is anyone suited by education, training and the necessary licensing to perform a medical service.

As defined in the UK, a healthcare professional is a person associated with either a specialty or a discipline and who is qualified and allowed by regulatory bodies to provide a healthcare service to a patient (Sergeant's Medical Dictionary, 2011)

Healthcare practitioners take care of patients with application of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based practice (EBP) is a medical decision-making process that makes use of knowledge obtained via research and existing theory. These professionals examine, diagnose, treat and prevent injuries, illnesses and other impairments (St Patrick's blog, 2019).

The different types of healthcare practitioners are as follows:

- **Primary care professionals:** These are the physicians whom patients usually approach first to determine the cause of their issue. Primary care professionals are divided into different categories, such as:
 - **General doctors:** These are the doctors whose areas of specializations include pediatrics, family medicine or internal medicine, and are usually assisted by physician assistants.
 - **Nurse practitioners:** Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have completed specializations in areas like geriatrics, family practice, adult care or pediatrics.

- **OB/GYN:** These are doctors who specialize in the areas of obstetrics and gynecology.
- **Nursing care professionals:** They are of various types, such as:
 - **Registered nurses:** These are nurses who hold a nursing diploma and are licensed to work in that particular location.
 - **Licensed practical nurses:** These are caregivers who have obtained the required training to handle different medical conditions.
 - **Advanced practice nurses:** These nurses have more education and experience compared to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Advanced practice nurses can obtain training in domains such as community health, prenatal care, cardiac health, anesthesia and psychiatry.
- **Drug therapy professionals:** These health professionals graduate from a pharmaceutical university that allows them to give information about different medicines to patients. The information shared could include the dosage of medicine or its side effects.
- **Specialty care professionals:** These doctors usually specialize in one field of medicine after studying about it extensively for a number of years. Some specialties include neurology, urology, cardiology, psychiatry and oncology.
- **Therapists:** Therapists are also considered to be specialists, but their areas of expertise vary from those of doctors. Therapists are usually responsible for helping patients recover from injuries and illnesses through working on physical aspects like movement, speech and coordination. (St Patrick's blog,2019).

REFLECTION/LESSON LEARNT FROM THE MODULE

I learnt about the different stages of human development by Dr. Armstrong from pre-birth, birth hope, infancy, the early childhood, the middle childhood, the late childhood, the adolescent, the adulthood, the mid-life, mature adulthood, late adulthood and dying life.

I also learnt about the Freud psychosexual theory of development, Erikson theory of psychosocial development, Piagets theory of cognitive development, Kolhberg S. theory of moral development, the Carl Jungs model, and the human psycho model.

To sum it up, I am very grateful to for this module because it is an eye opener for us in this field. All theories and models learnt will serve as a guide going forward.

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