

# ASSIGNMENT 1 - GROUP PRESENTATION

- Psychology for Health and Social Care
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## DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGY

- Psychology is the science that focuses on human behaviour and mental processes (Ohio State University)
- The study of experiences and their impact on a psychological level (Kalat 3-13)
- Different branches in Psychology include (Velarde et al.) clinical, behavioural, forensic, organizational, developmental
- Developmental psychology refers to behaviour patterns of progress for each lifespan stage (Kalat 3-13)  
Areas covered: physical development, motor skills, mental cognition, emotional expression (White et al. 4-39)
- Infancy stage (0-2 years)
- This stage begins with birth and is characterized by fast-paced physical, psychological and physiological growth and change and the development of perceptual abilities, (Bornstein)

Psychology is the science that studies the mind and the behaviour and mental processes. Is the understanding of how psychological aspects influence and behaviours in different lifespans.

Types- from clinical to behavioural, from cognitive to forensic or developmental where the mechanisms that make babies function is studied, there are many classifications of this science

Clinical psychology -anxiety, depression, substance abuse

Organizational psychology is also known as industrial psychology that deals with training teams for specific jobs

Developmental psychology, this branch studies the patterns in human development following each stage of the life.

The infancy stage is also referred to as the growth stage. This is where major

growth and physical changes happen at a very fast pace. Within few days after birth, the infant will recognize the mother's voice

Begins with perceptual abilities and intelligence

The period where brain development happens at fast rates

This stage is characterized by physical growth and language development

Visual perception starts developing by 7 months of life. At the same age, infants can distinguish all sounds related to language

Between 1 and 7 months, infants move from being able to distinguish colour to be able to identify different facial expressions

## INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF “INFANCY”

- Characteristics of Infancy lifespan stage according to (Austrian 7-39):
  - S. Freud and the development of ego (starts at 6 months)
  - N. Chodorow and sexual identity beginning at birth
  - M. Mahler and the rapid cognitive growth
  - D. Stern and the developing of self (0-3 years) and “alerting activity”
  - E. Erikson and the Trust and mistrust stage (0-1 years) (McLeod)
  - J. Piaget and the Sensorimotor stage considered the origin of intelligence (Mandler)
- Main developmental characteristics (Bornstein et al.)
  - Physical and motor development such as grasping and crawling
  - Behavioural development as infants react to discomfort, relaxation as early as three months.
  - Emotional development such as smiling at the sight of own person in the mirror

Freud considered ego as being the most important part of psychoanalysis and through his research he concluded that this is being developed in the infancy stage in the age of 6 and eight months just as the infant becomes more aware of the environment. He considers birth as being the greatest trauma in an infant's life and because of this, the psychic develop a defense mechanism that he identified as being regression and repression.

Chodorow (1978) believes that sexual identity is settled by the age of three and begins at birth.

Mahler (1972) characterizes the infancy stage as a symbiotic relationship between the infant and mother. he describes the crawling. As the beginning of the infant's independence from the mother, whilst suffering from separation. As the infant is starting to crawl he would be proud of his accomplishments but quickly returned to

the mother that is named by Mahler as “Homebase”. He characterizes this stage as a rapid cognitive growth.

Stern, an infant psychiatrist, believes infancy to be the beginning of social interaction that produces interaction and sensory-motor effects. He identified the phase that he named “alerting activity” where an infant will appear quiet but in reality, he is observing external factors and events.

Erikson’s Trust and Mistrust stage where he talks about the uncertainty an infant experience about the world, he lives in. This stage may result in anxiety in later life.

J Piaget considers the most dramatic changes happen in infancy. The sensorimotor stage identified by Piaget is characterized by intelligence being visible through motor activity. At the end of this stage, the two-year-old infant will be able to use symbols in the attempt of representing the world around them.

Motor development- by 4 months infants learn to grasp. They will start crawling between 7 to 10 months.

Behavioural development. Infants will react to the discomfort that a wet nappy gives them for example.

Emotional development. the infant will recognize your emotions such as when you speak in an angry voice to him or her. Another example could be the distress infants show when they lose a toy.

## UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY

- Cognitive development is an interactive process where the child is collecting social and cultural knowledge which becomes individualized (Vygotsky, n.d.)
- Brain creates connections between neurons in the early years to support the infant's cognitive development (Dana Foundation, 2015)
- In the first 2 years of life the child's movements improve and allow them to interact with the environment (Dana Foundation, 2015)
- Child's ability to communicate evolves through a short period (Gross, 2015)
- Piaget puts an emphasis on the infant's agent role where they build their own reality (Fischer and Hencke, 1996)

From birth, the brain is formed by billions of cells called Neurons, which grow during the lifetime and create connections, called Synapsis, forming Circuits where information is shared between each cell through electrochemical impulses. During the first months of life, the brain overproduces Synapses to support the child's development yet after 2 years the brain reinforces the connections that are used more frequently which will become the foundation for more complicated skills that will be learned later. The connections that are not used are will fade, this process is called Pruning. (Dana Foundation, 2015)

As a newborn, the movements are involuntary or done for reflex, while they can see and hear, they have a limited capacity to follow objects and they prefer human voices. From 4 months the baby is able to roll and use their hands for limited movements, while between 5 and 9 months the infant starts to crawl and sit but they still need to use hands to find balance, yet after 12 months the child starts getting up and by 18 months, they should be able to walk a few steps without help. Between 18 and 24 months, the child is able to do more complicated actions like running, walking up and down the stairs, kicking, throwing, or jumping in complete autonomy. (Dana Foundation, 2015)

In the second half of the last century, language development theories explained the child's cognitive development in social environments. Piaget, in 1950, affirms that adults can teach words to the infant but don't expect their understanding. Vygotsky, in 1962, considered words and thoughts as independent activities which can be combined after the age of 2 when thoughts can be described with words and the speech becomes rational (1981). (Gross, 2015; pp 302-313)

In their first year infants rely on sound to communicate with their parents, they start babbling between 6 and 9 months, when they can replicate phonemes multiple times, forming "words" (mama, dada). In this stage, the child is experimenting with the voice and exercise the vocal organs through spontaneous babbling.

Between 12 and 18 months they develop more a receptive vocabulary (ability to understand the meaning of words) than an expressive one (they may know what a dog is, but they refer to it miming the bark).

The psychologist Brown (1973) describes the vocabulary of an 18-30 months child as "telegraphic", due to their habit to express complex thoughts with meaningful words (for example "I want to drink water" becomes "Drink water").

After 30 months the child should be able to use more complicated words and create longer sentences.

(Gross,2015; pp 314-319)

In his studies, Piaget affirms that "Children are people from the time they are born", an idea that maintains its stability through time, and goes against Locke's "Tabulae rasae" theory, 1794, and Watson's "Lumps of clay" theory, 1925.

Piaget describes children as active agents in their development, they assimilate environmental events into schemes and accommodate the information from the

environment, people, objects and events. (Bonfenbrenner, 1993; Gibson, 1979; van Geert, 1994; et all.) Infants are then active agents who build their own realities and the physical and social context in which they dynamically shape their worlds. (Fischer and Hencke, 1996)

In this theory, “Assimilation” refers to the influence that a subject has on the environment; it offers the opportunity to gain new information and renew the old ones, yet the object may be distorted or excluded by the subject’s schema if not compatible or understood. (Piaget, 2011)

“Accommodation” refers to the process by which the subject modifies the old schema, or produces a new one, to introduce and accommodate the object.

“Assimilation” and “Accommodation” represent the interaction between the object and the subject. (Lei, 1987, p 110) Without “Accommodation” our cognition wouldn’t be able to improve and expand and without “Assimilation” there would be no difference with imitation.

Once the infant grows older, they are able to move their cognitive equilibrium to a higher level, this process is called “Equilibration”. “Equilibration” is constantly broken by the introduction and accommodation of new objects by external stimuli.

(Zhiqing, 2015)

## UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY

- “Emotions are multi-component responses to challenges and opportunities that are important to the individual’s goal” (Oatley et al., 2006)
- The primordial idea of “sharing” emotions in infants is called emotional contagion (Thornton, 2008)
- Through the growth, the infant develops a feeling of attachment towards the parents and relatives (Gross, 2015)



[www.google.com](http://www.google.com), n.d.

From an early age the infant tries to “imitate” the parent’s facial expressions showing a primordial idea of “sharing” the feelings, this process is called emotional contagion. This process doesn’t provide empathy as the kids still don’t understand the difference between facial expressions in the early months. Nelson, 1987, and Walker-Andrews, 1997, affirm that a 4-month-old finds interesting the parent’s expressivity without interpreting the feelings behind it, while Soken and Pick, in 1999, stated that only after 7 months the infants start preferring smiling and friendly faces over frowning ones. (Thornton, 2008; pp 145-154)

Once older the child learns how to monitor, evaluate and modify their emotion and reaction, this process is called “Emotional regulation” and contributes to the growth of the self-regulatory capacity and the creation of strategies of self-control, which is developed throughout the life-span. (Thompson, 1991)

Kagan, 1978, describes “attachment” as an intense, long-lasting bonding between

two people, which prolonged separation may cause sorrow.

In 1996 the psychologist Shaffer defined different stages of the attachment theory.

In the first 3 months, the baby develops attachment towards humans shown through smile (pre-attachment stage), between 3 and 7 months they start understanding which faces are familiar and which aren't, even so, they allowed everyone to look after them (indiscriminate attachment stage). When 8 months old the infants are trying to stay closer to certain people, mainly parents, and avoid unfamiliar faces with the risk of developing a fear of strangers that may remain until older age (discriminate attachment stage), from 9 months the babies are bonding with more people, including close relative like siblings, grandparents (multiple attachment stage).

Data shows that at 7 months, 29% of the infants have formed several bonds, at 10 months over 59% formed at least 1 attachment while after 18 months more than 87% have formed more than 1 attachment. (Gross, 2015; pp 531-554)

## BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN OF INFANTS

- Fear of strangers occurs in babies and young children which is normal for them. (Raising children network 2016-2021).
- Biting, pinching and pulling of hair, which is part of the normal behaviours in babies and toddlers.
- Overstimulation; babies tend to get irritated when there is too much going on such as noise.



This slide is discussing the normal behaviour pattern that should be expected from a normal growing infant. Some more behaviour patterns are shyness, fear of having a bath, children's habits like nail-baiting, pestering common habit among young children especially when they want something. Temperament is also a way your child responds to the world, which is very important for parents to understand their children's temperament because this would help them choose their parental strategies. Also, parental training can also be a determining factor in a child's behavioural pattern.

- Fussing and crying around 4-8 pm with an additional peak between 8 am and noon, especially among much more young infants. (APA PsycNet 2021).
- By week 8, there was also a progressive decrease in both average feeding and fussing/crying times, indicating increased settled and awake periods. (PubMed.gov).
- New-borns also tend to sleep about 16 hours every day, which a lot of times sleeping patterns are unpredictable. (Ontario midwives).



This slide is mainly focusing on new-borns' behavioural patterns which mostly consist of them sleeping and crying out of hunger or if they are in discomfort. New-borns also have a pattern of deep sleep, light sleep, and drowsiness where they may fall asleep. In which they repeat this cycle for about 8 weeks. You can help by providing them warmth, love, and good care as they are just getting used to the outside world.

## PIAGET'S THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

(Piaget, 1936)

- Indicates that intelligence changes as children develop
- A child's evolution is not only about obtaining knowledge, but they have to acquire, construct and use it. (Mcleod, 2020)
- Major aspects are the process of getting knowledge and the stages the human moves through, to gain this ability. (Huitt and Hummel, 2003).
- Infants assemble their thinking process by using sensory involvement and their increasing motor skills (Liberty University - Course Apps, n.d.)

## IMPORTANCE OF PIAGET'S THEORY FOR INFANTS

- Helps to understand infant's intellectual growth
- Highlights that infants are not only recipients of knowledge
- Stresses that infants are constantly exploring and experimenting to get an understanding of how to adapt to new situations
- Emphasizes how infants learn things about themselves and the environment (Verywell Mind, n.d.)
- Shows that infants learn that objects and people still exist even if they are not visible - object permanence (Baillargeon, 1986)



([www.nwlink.com](http://www.nwlink.com), n.d.)

Jean Piaget was a pioneer when it comes to the study of cognitive development during infancy. He indicated that an infant's way of doing things is not inferior but different to adults. Piaget observed his own children, forming the theory of cognitive development from birth to adulthood which consists of four periods:

Sensorimotor period (infancy), when infants use their senses to discover the world and get coordinated motor responses. They separate themselves from others and have little understanding of action and reaction, for example if pulling a thread makes a toy move or make a noise. Symbolic language is developed mostly for making demands. At around 7 months they begin to realize that objects still exist even if they are not constantly visible.

Preoperational (toddler and early childhood), symbolic thinking, learning to use proper language with egocentric thinking, recognizing shapes and groups of

objects.

Concrete operational (elementary and early adolescence), logical thinking about objects and events, but concepts are attached to concrete situations.

Formal operational (adolescence and adulthood), thinking logically, thoughts become idealistic, can plan and combine known concepts with others. (Huitt and Hummel, 2003)

This presentation focuses on the period of infancy. For this life span, Piaget discovered that, from birth, children go through cognitive changes founded on experience and time. Sensorimotor intelligence begins when the baby is born and grows through the life stage of infancy (first 2 years of life) and is divided into six stages.

(Liberty University – Course Apps, n.d.)

## THE SUB- STAGES OF SENSORIMOTOR (INFANCY) STAGE OF JEAN PIAGET'S THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Reflex acts (first month of life) primary reaction to touching.
- Primary circular reactions (1-4 months) babies intentionally repeat actions centered on their own bodies
- Secondary circular reactions (4-8 months) infants repeating actions with the involvement of objects.
- Co-ordinating secondary reactions (8-12 months) babies start using their acquired knowledge to get the result they want. They reach the objectives they desire even using different objects on the way.
- Tertiary circular reactions (12-18 months) infants try to adapt to a specific situation and try to put together objects they took apart.
- Symbolic thought (18-24 months) babies have the ability to visualize objects that are not physically present (object permanence). (Mcleod, 2019)



(slidetodoc.com, n.d.)

Jean Piaget was the pioneer in the field of cognitive development in the stage of infancy. His work on infants helps to understand the first stage of a child's development. During this period babies learn about the world by using their senses to interact with their surroundings. All they learn is through experience. They suck, lick, bang objects together and taste everything they have in their hands, that's how they develop good motor skills and coordination.

According to Piaget babies use their experience to develop their knowledge about what's around them. They learn on their own, even without the influence of adults, with internal motivation. During the six sub-stages of the sensorimotor stage, babies gradually develop their skills.

Through the reflexive stage, infants respond reflexively to stimulation; for example,

they suck a finger put in their mouth.

Between 1 and 4 months, primary circular reactions appear, when babies make specific movements for their own enjoyment. They suck their thumb, kick or smile intentionally.

Later, at the age of 4 months, they start to use objects and they gain satisfaction from making things happen. This marks the start of repetitive behavior, to continue with activities like, for example: dropping objects, shaking them to make sounds, laughing, and using sound to express happiness or sadness.

Coordinating secondary circular reactions (8-12 months) is a period when infants begin to use their learned abilities to achieve goals. They get what they desire and can move towards objects they trying to get. Also at this stage, they enjoy simple games, react to the noise by turning their head, recognize simple words, and sometimes say a few words imitating adult speech.

Between 12 and 18 months, during the tertiary circular reactions period, babies have more motor coordination and can explore the world. They take objects apart to put them back together and repeat their activities to see the outcome. It is possible for them to carry out planned actions to complete tasks. During this period babies enjoy short stories and songs.

In the last sub-stage of symbolic thought at 18 months, children begin to understand that objects still exist, even if they cannot be seen – this is referred to as object permanence. At this stage, children repeat words they have previously learned and develop more vocabulary skills: for example. can make the request using two words or ask short questions.

Object permanence is the highest achievement of the sensorimotor stage of Piaget's theory. This is the ability to understand that objects and people exist even without seeing them. According to Piaget, babies begin to realize this at the age of 8 months. Playing peek-a-boo or hiding objects from babies who understand object

permanence, will show that they still looking for it and trying to find it. Before this understanding, they would usually move to a different toy. This knowledge also relates to parents leaving the room when babies know that it is temporary, and they will come back. Object permanence is believed to be one of the earliest approaches for evaluating working memory ( Healthline, n.d.).

## ANALYSIS OF PIAGET'S THEORY



(www.google.com,n.d.)

### PROS:

Become a framework for peer learning in educational settings (O'Donnel and King, 2014).

Piaget's argument that kids think differently than adults started a new era of research on the mental development of children (Cherry, 2006).

Very influential on teachers, parents, and childcare workers.

Have a big impact on psychologists, to become fascinated observers of children's development (Lefrancois, 2006).

### CONS:

Criticism of terminology, tasks are described with confusing terms (Carlson and Buskist, 1997).

Criticism of stages, diversity in children's thinking within cognitive tasks (Gray,1994).

Criticism of action-orientated approach, children more competent in their practical knowledge

Dependency on the formal western model of schooling- observing his own children- small sample (Vygotsky, 1978). (Massey.ac.nz, 2019).

There have been many critical opinions of Piaget's theory. Carlson and Buskist (1997) suggest that the terminology used by Piaget is not appropriate. They mention that Piaget doesn't mention a specific definition to guide researchers to find a link between behavioural changes and changes in the mind.

There's also a criticism of the stages in Piaget's theory. Weiten (1992) noticed that some young children develop object permanence earlier than according to Piaget's theory. He also wrote that some children may be less egocentric than Piaget believed. There's also criticism, that individual differences between children of similar age, may put them into different stages. More criticism came into Piaget's action-oriented approach. Research shows that even children without the ability to move are capable of cognitive development.

Children's Piaget worked with were born and grew up in Geneva, and their

development depends on the western model of learning and schooling.

While some criticism of Piaget's work has appeared over the years, experts agree that his work has had a very important impact on education. Educational programs are now built on his belief that children's education should be provided at the level for which they are developmentally prepared (Cherry, 2006).

Piaget's work has also had a big impact on psychology and leads to lots of research including experiments. His ideas have been used to understand and communicate with children particularly in education, for example, discovery learning (Premnath Ramachandranpillai, 2014)

## CONCLUSION

- Psychology is the study of the mind and its influence on people's behaviour (The British Psychological Society, 2019).
- Cognitive development is described as the process via which individuals acquire, organize and learn to use knowledge (Gauvain and Richert, 2016) while emotions are described by APA (American Psychological Association) as "a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral and physiological elements"
- As newborn, infants spend most of their time crying and sleeping which are consider typical behaviors that helps their development.
- Piaget's theory defines the infant's cognitive development throughout different stages. Nowadays educational programs are based on Piaget's theory with divided classes and with stimulating activities that helps the child's development.

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