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Module Title: Psychology for Health and Social Care
Module ID: BMHP4003
Title: Developmental Psychology in Infant
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Date: 4th May 2021
Word Count: 2000

Introduction

This essay discusses the developmental psychology in infancy. Developmental psychology can be defined as the scientific approach that aims at explaining the growth, changes, that occur throughout a person's lifespan. It was formally used to understand the mental, emotional and, cognitive growth of a child. This is because the most important changes to human life occur primarily in childhood although changes also occur in adulthood.

Developmental psychology: is an important aspect of psychology that is responsible for understanding the development of humans throughout the lifespan. The understanding, importance, and application of developmental psychology help the world to understand themselves, their children, and the whole world at large.

Developmental psychology is the scientific approach that explains growth, change, and consistency throughout a lifespan. It highlights the need to recognise the dynamism and changes of thinking feeling and behaviour as they apply to human life. The field is theoretical, encompassing studies ranging from biology, socio-emotional process, to cognitive processes (Kalat, 2021).

Developmental psychology also called lifespan psychology, it deals with performances, attitudes, motivations, social functioning, and constant changes that occur in a man throughout his entire life with his full understanding of these changes within the context of his experiences (Riegel, 1976).

Infancy Life Stage Development: infancy is the period between when a child is given birth and when the child starts speaking which usually happens between one to two years later. The infancy period is a time for relatively growth and development. An infant has the most rapid growth of the post-natal stages. The development in an infant is spontaneous and needs no special training.

The infancy period is when the mother provides all or majority of the nourishment necessary for the growth and development of the infant. The infancy period is significant for the development of the brain than the other organs.

During the first three months, the brain and the body of the infant are learning to live in a new environment. During this time, the infant will start smiling to themselves and later respond to other people's smiles. The infant will start tracking objects with their eyes and raise their chest and feet when they lie them down on the stomach. They will be able to hold things with their hand and open and close their hands and put the hand into their mouth. They will be able to turn towards the familiar voice and faces.

At four to six months, the infant will start learning to reach out to the outside world. The infant will be able to roll from front to back and vice versa, make a sound like a real language, laugh, reach out for an object, and sit up with enough support. They will be able to track object more frequently, grab their feet and put them in their mouth, and start showing interest in food that the mother is eating. The infant will start associating with their name, start sitting without support, expressing emotion, and start expressing displeasure when play stops.

At seven to nine months. the infant will start responding to the word 'no', responding to emotion, putting objects into their mouth, tracking objects more smoothly, recognising emotion by the tone of the parent. The infant will start to bring out teeth, try to start standing on their legs, start showing distress when they are separated from their parent. The infant will start crawling and start pointing at objects they like.

At ten to twelve months, the infant will start walking with the aid of objects, start banging objects to hear the sound, and start feeding themselves. The infant will start calling names, start understanding some action words e.g., stop that, and start coping behaviour like picking the phone. The infant will be walking unsupported, start saying some simple words e.g., no, have few numbers of teeth, and start referencing the right objects when they are called.

The infancy period sometimes ends when the infant is weaned from breastmilk and can feed on complimentary food. Age three is the end of infancy in a child and at this stage, the child can perform some duties like running short distances and manipulating small objects.

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory: as explained by Pulaski and M.A.S (1971) is about the changes, procedures, and intelligent designs that happen in children especially in their growth from infants to adults. They further went on to explain how children understand the world through several patterns of learning and links that

connect their ideas, perceptions, action, and inactions. He explained that a child attains equilibrium when their experience matches their understanding and disequilibrium as when a child cannot understand a new task or situation which usually occurs when the child cannot use the existing information on a new task.

Piaget believes that learning is caused by the blending of assimilation (adding information to the previous knowledge) and accommodation (starting a new knowledge from the beginning). He noted that a new experience is formed when children reflect first on formal experience to understand a new concept. Piaget believes human create their understanding of the world.

The assumption of Piaget about children intelligence is children intelligence is different from an adult in quality than quantity i.e., children think and see the world differently from an adult, children do not wait for someone to fill their heads with ideas about the world but rather build up their knowledge about it, seeing things from children point of view is the only way to understand their reasoning.

Piaget stated that cognitive development occurs in four stages in one's childhood. The stages always happen in the same order, the children will pass through each stage without skipping anyone, the changes are visible from one stage to another, and changes are in building blocks from one to another. It was noted by Piaget himself that all children advance through stages that are of suchlike order and magnitude with slight differences only in incidence in which a child passes through a stage and another (Piaget J, 1970).

Further, still opined by Piaget, is that this difference is a function of cognitive development that involves the relationship of natural capacity and capability and events present in the environment in which the child passes through procedurally. The procedures or stages are divided into four, heightened by mental development such as reasoning, morals, language, and memory.

- **The sensorimotor stage (birth-2yrs):** this is the stage that deals with infants and it is associated with several growth and psychological changes. During this developmental phase of development, the infant starts to utilise the skills and abilities (looking, sucking, grasping, listening, etc.) they are born with. The infant gains understanding through their senses and motor ability. The infant understands the performance of objects that they exist even when they are not

in view and they search for the object and the infant can represent the world mentally. the infant has no idea and cognitive picture of the world in which he lives so they lack a sense of object performance and permanence. Towards the conclusion of this stage, there is a general associative function where infants believe there is object substitution and, in that regard, infants may start using language to identify the objects they want and suggest their feelings (Bjorklund & Pellegrini, 2000).

The sensorimotor stage of cognitive theory is the stage that is punctuated with infant growth and development, according to Piaget. The other stages are:

- **The preoperational stage (2-7yrs):** in this stage, the toddler uses language and mental imagery to represent the world. They make a word or an object to represent something that is not the same as the real object. The look of the world dominates the thinking of the child and the toddler lack problem-solving thought. The child also begins to imagine objects such as toys to have life, breathe, and exist with human features (Butchon & Behav, 2017). Finally, the thinking of the child is still cantered on his view of the world and intuitive.
- **The concrete operational stage (7-11yrs):** this stage will witness the beginning of logically thinking in the child's life and some properties will remain the same even when things change in appearance. The child can also reverse things mentally and start thinking about what others think and feels. This stage delves into logic and operations as they relate to thinking psychology. For instance, it is a stage where a child will start thinking things with concrete evidence no matter how little (Butchon & Behav, 2017).
- **The formal operational stage (12 and over):** here, the child begins to reflect on issues that are either moral, philosophical, ethical, social, or political in nature but as well require practical and impractical reasonings. The stage explores logical and deductive reasoning.
- **Erik Erikson Psychosocial Theory**

Erik Erikson's psychosocial state that personality development happened in a series of stages and the impact of social interaction and relationship is important in the growth and development. Erik noted that conflict is experienced by children and serves as a turning point in their development.

The conflict as described by Erik is premised on the development or failed development of psychological quality. He continued to establish a conflict whereby conquest is determined and shaped by the psychological strength through which a child passes through and homes in as life skills (Marcia & Josselson, 2013) that will serve them throughout their life and failure will lead to them lacking the skill.

Erik noted that behaviour and action are motivated by competence and procedural associations with competence throughout the growth of a child. He also noted that the result at the end of each stage will either result in ego strength or a sense of not feeling enough as pertinent to that stage. The stages of Erik's psychosocial development are in 8. They are:

- **Trust vs Mistrust:** this is the first phase of Erik's theory and it centres around an infant. Erik noted that psychosocial development happens between birth and when the infant reaches age one and it is the fundamental stage in an infant's life. Erik deduces this to the fact that the infant is dependent on the caregiver and trust development is premised on the person taking care of the infant. He also noted that the failure of the caregiver to care and love the infant sufficiently will lead to mistrust and dependence on the adult in the infant's life. Erik noted that the development of trust by the infant will result in the infant feeling safe and secure. The feeling of mistrust in an infant is a result of an inconsistent and emotionally unavailable caretaker.

The other stages of Erik psychosocial development are:

- **Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt:** Concentrating on early childhood of a child, this stage places emphasis on the development of a child through personal control (Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2013). The child starts feeling happenings and events shaped by autonomy, shame, and doubt.
- **Initiative vs guilt:** this stage takes place during the pre-school year. Directing play and social interaction is the way by which children at this stage access their power over the world.
- **Industry vs Inferiority:** This phase talks about the happenings of a child towards his growth and psychological development especially during the ages of 5 and 11. Here, the accomplishment and ability of a child's sense of pride have developed the child through social interaction.

- Identity vs Confusion: this stage takes place during the often-chaotic teenage years. The personal identity of the child is developed for the child's entire life. The success of this conflict may be seen in the way the child stays true to himself, believing in himself, as the failure to make do with that is certain to lead to self-confusion and low self-esteem.
- Intimacy vs Isolation: the formation of intimacy happens in this stage. The success of this stage results in a strong relationship while failure leads to loneliness and isolation.
- Generativity vs Stagnation: in this stage, adults need to nurture things that will remain after their death e.g., have children, provide benefits to people, etc. Success leads to having a feeling of accomplishment while failure leads to shallow involvement in life.
- Integrity vs Despair: Occurring during old age wherein the reflection on the person's whole life is done. Success in this stage will lead to satisfaction while failure will lead to regret, bitterness, and despair.

Impact of Attachment on Emotional Development of Infant

An infant is heavily dependent on their caregiver and the attachment always affects their later childhood and adulthood development. According to John Bowlby's theory of attachment, humans are attached and associated as part of survival, and this attachment is a biological survival need.

Attachment triggers an infant's sense of security or insecurity and can serve as a roadmap to social security (Fraley & Shaver, 2008). It was further classified into four groups by them which are secure, anxious/avoidance, resistant and disorganized.

The significance of attachment to an infant is that it provides a mental foundation an infant can always draw strength and social cognizance from in relating with himself and others in his environment. It can impact an infant's sense of self, an infant's sense of others, and the relationship between the infant and self and others.

Successful attachment in an infant helps to prepare the infant for adulthood. It will lead to proper communication, increase in self-confidence and it creates an avenue for independence and exploration while the unsuccessful attachment will generate social insecurity, lack of problem-solving and coping skills, and isolative behaviours followed by poor decision-making (Fraley & Shaver, 2008).

Parent's Role in Modelling Infant Behaviour

The parent is the first contact for infants, they guide, nurture, teach, counsel, and protect them. The parenting style of parents varies from one parent to another, and it affects the behaviour of the child when they reach adulthood. Baumrind (1971) defines three types of parenting styles which are the authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parent. He suggested that authoritative parenting style is the most effective parenting style of the three because it promotes how a child endures potential negative influences. The nature of a parent determines the outcome of an infant.

Conclusion

Developmental psychology is important in the life of an individual because it explains the development and changes that happen in an individual from infant to adulthood. Erik and Piaget explain the roles and development of an individual and how an individual moves from infancy to adulthood. Piaget stated the role of cognitive development in an individual using four stages while Erik stated the different conflicts that an individual must fight which may affect the life of the individual. The role of the caregiver is also important in the infant stage of an individual because it has a future effect on the life of the individual.

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