Developmental psychology

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Key Issues

Key Issues 1: Domains of Development

There are three domains of development:

- physical development
- cognitive development
- psychosocial development

Key Issues 2: Change vs Continuity

Developmental psychology assesses development by looking at:

- change
- continuity
Key Issues

- **Key Issues 3: Nature vs Nurture**
  - Developmental psychology assesses the contribution to development of:
    - Nature
    - Nurture

- **Key Issues 4: Continuous and Stage-like changes**
  - How much does development simply continue earlier acquisition - gradual or CONTINUOUS development?
  - How much does development lead to qualitatively new behaviours and skills - STAGES of development?
Key Issues

Key Issues 5: Universal vs Context-specific development

- How much can we identify changes that happen to everyone?
- How much should we take into account specific human and cultural contexts and experiences?
Key Theories in Developmental Psychology

- Cognitive-Developmental Theories
- Psychodynamic Theories
- Behavioural Learning and Social Cognitive Learning Theories
Cognitive Developmental Theories

- Focus on cognitive development:
  - How thinking and problem solving develop
  - How cognitive activities contribute to development in general

- Piaget’s Age-Stage Theory
  - Children show qualitatively different levels of comprehension and reasoning at different ages
  - Role of environment merely to provide information
  - Everyone passes through the same 4 stages of development
Piaget’s Cognition development theory

- Pro-operation
- Concrete-operation
- Formal-operation
- Perception-action

- 0-2 yr
- 2-6 yr
- 7-10 yr
- 10-13yr
Piaget continuity of development

Butterfly: Developmental discontinuity

Level of development

Caterpillar

Age

Chrysalis (in cocoon)

Butterfly
Psychodynamic Theories

Development is an active process influenced by:
- inborn, biological drives
- social/emotional experiences (conscious and unconscious)
- People pass through stages of development

Freud’s Psychoanalytic Theory
- born with basic animal unconscious instincts
- development depends on transforming these into socially acceptable, rational behaviour
Psychodynamic Theories

Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory

- Role of:
  - Internal psychological factors
  - Life circumstances and developmental history
  - Social cultural and historical context

- 8 psychosocial stages of development based on a sequence of ‘crises’.

- Resolution of crisis important for healthy social development
Erik Erikson

The first integrated psychosocial view of individual development through eight stages from birth to death. For him, development lies not in stability per se, but in the changes necessary to transcend successive contradictions, conflicts, and states of disequilibrium.
Psychosocial developmental theory - eight stages

- 0-1 yr  the basic sense of trust
- 1-3yr  the sense of autonomy
- 4-6yr  the sense of initiative
- 6-12 yr  the basic sense of industry
- 13-18 yr  the sense of self-identity
- 19-34 yr  the sense of intimacy
- 35-59 yr  the sense of productivity
- >60 yr  the sense of self-integration
Behaviourism

John Watson

- Children learn through experience
- ‘Nurture’ rather than ‘nature’
- Developing child is extremely sensitive to effects of environmental influences
Social Cognitive Learning Theories

- Learning and experience are source of developmental change
- Development gradually occurs as we learn new responses as a result of experience
- Individual life experiences differ, therefore learning differs

Bandura:
  - Observational learning
  - Imitation
  - Modelling
The Mental health of adolescence----the social and emotional development

- Changes in self-conception---who am I:
- Changes in self-esteem—how well do I like myself
- Establishing one’s identity (identity crises): “without a healthy sense of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry, it is difficult to establish a sense of identity, the way in which they resolves the crises of identity will have an impact on his struggle with the crises of adulthood”
  - Making choices
  - Occupational identity
  - Gender role and ethnic identity
  - Moratorium: a time out for adolescent
The Mental health of adolescence----the social and emotional development

- Development of autonomy: the process of becoming an individual
- Autonomy and family relationships: solving problems; seeing oneself with one's own eyes; deidealizing parents
- Cognitive and emotional growth lead to more decision making skills. They may enjoy the chance to care for younger children
The Developmental Tasks of Young Adulthood

- To develop a young-adult sense of self and other: the third individuation
- To develop adult friendships
- To develop the capacity for intimacy; to become a spouse
- To become a biological and psychological parent
- To develop a relationship of mutuality and equality with parents while facilitating their midlife development
- To establish an adult work identity
- To develop adult forms of play
- To integrate new attitudes toward time
Hypotheses About Development in Adulthood

- Development is a life-long, dynamic process that is basically the same in childhood and adulthood.

- Basic themes from childhood continue to affect psychic development in adulthood, but adult functioning and symptomatology are an amalgam of both childhood and adult experiences.

- Recognition and acceptance of the finiteness of time and the inevitability of personal death are major psychic organizers in adulthood, both in the promotion of normal development and the formation of symptomatology.
Transition From Young to Middle Adulthood

Development in young adulthood is embedded in close relationships. Intimacy, love, and commitment are related to the mastery of the relationships most immediate to personal experience.

The transition from young adulthood to middle age includes widening concern for the larger social system and differentiation of one's own social, political, and historical system from others. Authors have described middle adulthood in terms of generativity, self-actualization, and wisdom.
The Developmental Tasks of Middle Adulthood

- To integrate the potential for attachment and loss
- To accept the aging body
- To accept time limitation and personal death; time sense in middle adulthood
- To reappraise relationships; to let children go, achieve a relationship of equality with them, and integrate new members into the family
- To accept the reversal of roles with elderly parents
- To develop midlife friendships
- To become a generative mentor and plan for retirement
- To give play new meanings and purposes
- To become a grandparent
Older age

Mental disorders are no more common in elderly adults than in younger age groups.

Prevalence estimates of common disorders are generally lower for those over the age of 65 than for younger age cohorts.

Older adults reported experiencing fewer negative emotions but more positive emotions than those in the younger age cohorts.

Integrity versus despair

Successful resolution of this crisis involved a process of life review and achieving a sense of peace and wisdom through coming to terms with how one's life was lived.
Adjustment and coping in elderly adults

- Older adults experience significant challenges as they enter and negotiate the last phase of life, including bereavement, loss of socially valued roles (e.g., worker), and chronic, accumulating health problems.

- How age affects the process of managing change and discontinuity?
Role Transitions

- Two major role transitions
  - The transition from worker to nonworker,
  - The transition from spouse to widow.

- Major transitions challenge the individual to redefine identity and create new roles to replace those that have been lost.
Resilience of the Aging Self

The process of both maintaining adaptive behavior in the face of stress and recovering from adversity.

That maintenance of adaptive behavior despite these losses is an example of the resilience of the aging self.

Resilience -- a process of selective optimization, an accommodative process of rescaling goals to match one's limitations and the demands of the environment, and investing the fewer resources available in personally salient activities that maintain self-esteem.