

In what ways can
'childhood' and 'youth'
be understood as
social constructions



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Understanding Childhood Introduction Childhood has been an issue that is attracting a lot of interest in the social science. Sociologists claim that childhood is a social construction rather than a biological natural occurrence (Veerman, 1992, p. 39). Different sociologists have supported their claims in different ways that involve historical, development and sociocultural approaches. They tend to use history, development and sociocultural approaches to prove that it is incorrect to claim that childhood is biological since childhood has been different over the years. The geographical setting also justifies this claim, stating that childhood over the years varies in different geographic settings.

The objective of this essay is to identify the different ways childhood and youth is because of social construction. The essay will mainly use Kehily's book understanding youths. Kehily is one of the most popular sociologists in the world today. She has researched on many issues relating to childhood, youths, gender and sexuality. In the book Understanding Youths, she has used history and sociocultural approaches to prove that childhood is a social construction.

The use of history and sociocultural approaches is important in her book since in part one, she talks about perspective. She has used past researches by other sociologists in trying to show the changes that childhood has undergone based on the time period, culture and the economic activities during the time stated. She has used Aries findings that in the 15th century, children even at the age of 5 years were free to do anything that the adults were doing (Classen, 2005, p. 171). This changed in the 16th century, where children were for economic purposes since they could work to boost the family's income. During the industrial revolution, childhood changed since <https://assignbuster.com/in-what-ways-can-childhood-and-youth-be-understood-as-social-constructions/>

the law against child labor was introduced thus children suffered from separation with their parents. In 1950, childhood took another twist and it was the beginning of children being very dependent on their parents (Veerman, 1992, p. 58).

The second part of Kehily's book is self-identity; she has based her argument on the historical findings that childhood is different due to the social status (Kehily, 2007, p. 19). She claims that in the West; whose occupants were wealthy spoiled their children, this is different with the Western region where childhood had no meaning since their parents were poor thus they had to work. The third part of the book covers the activities and that the youths engage in thus gaining experience. She states that it is through education that the youth can acquire an identity and make it easier to be responsible (Kehily, 2007, p. 67).

Using Kehily's book in this essay to note the ways childhood and youth is a social construction we will learn how to understand the youth thus ensure better initiation to adulthood by the youths. This will also make youths more acceptable in the community after this research.

Following this plan, it will make the essay to be easier to read. This will also ensure that all the important issues are covered.

Introduction of the essay is key

Thesis statement, which will ensure the essay's main objective, is stated and discussed fully.

Discussion of the theories that support and criticize childhood as a social construction.

Discussion of the analyzed data giving positive and negative effects of the method and assumptions made.

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Conclusion.

Referencing is important to support the information

References

Classen, A. (2005). *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: the results of a paradigm shift in the history of mentality*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.

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Veerman, P. E. (1992). *The rights of the child and the changing image of childhood*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.