

# Essay on human development

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



A Life Span View, 6th edition by Robert V. Kail and John C. Cavanaugh is a book about human development. It looks into the life span of a person highlighting the various stages of human development from conception till late stages of life. This paper will cover the first chapter of the book “ The Study of Human Development.” I find this chapter interesting since it elaborates on developmental theories and research by theorists on human behavior. The first chapter is an overview of the whole book, while the rest of the chapters explain the stages of human development individually.

The chapter begins by looking into three major recurring issues of human development. Kail and Cavanaugh present these characteristics of human development as, “ nature and nurture, continuity and discontinuity, and universal and context specific development” (2012, p. 35). The nature and nurture issue explains how the environment and genetics of a person determine her development. It explores the extent to which the two factors influence human development. Theory creators and researchers argue that the interaction of the two determine development.

The continuity and discontinuity issue is about if the specific developmental occurrence in an individual depicts a smooth progress, or sudden changes in the life span (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2012). Universal and context specific development pose a question as to whether human development pursues one main path for every human being, or it is basically influenced by the social cultural values.

Development of human beings is collectively influenced by the effect of four basic forces; biological, psychological, social cultural and lifecycle forces (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2012). According to the bio-psychosocial outline, the four

forces influence the development process mutually and development cannot make sense if any one of the forces is not included. Neuroscience which involves the study of the nervous system of a human being and its connection to the brain, vividly illustrates the interaction among the forces. Developmental theories put across by different theorists focus on justified and testable explanations behind human behavior and the manner in which they alter with time. According to Kail and Cavanaugh, “ Learning theory focuses on the development of observable behavior. Operant conditioning is based on the notions of reinforcement, punishment, and environmental control of behavior. Social learning theory proposes that people learn by observing others” (2012, p. 36).

Psychodynamic theories propose that at various ages people are challenged with conflicts. The behavior of a person is influenced by the manner in which the conflicts are settled. Erikson with his lifespan theory regarding psychological development explains that the said development entails 8 universal stages individually attributed to specific struggles (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2012).

Cognitive theories of development discuss human development based on the thinking of that person. Piaget suggested that based on the information people have they are able to synthesize it and form theories upon which they rely. Vygotsky in his theory suggested that the values that the culture of a person uphold, shape the development process.

Scientists have been engaged in research trying to understand the human development using samples that are assumed to represent the whole population. These researches include correlation studies which try to find the

relationships existing among different natural variables. The scientists perform several studies and put their research together. They determine trends hence establish the relationships between different variables.