

Typical developmental profile essay sample

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



Human development is the process of growth from a one-celled zygote through to a mature adult human being. Development occurs in the physical, cognitive and psychosocial realms and can be influenced by heredity, environment and maturation (Papalia et al., 2009). During childhood, typical physical development involves the acquisition of the fine and gross motor skills including coordination, control, movement and manipulation. Typical physical development during adolescence involves pubescent changes as the body develops and matures sexually. During young adulthood, physical development involves one's organs and systems operating at peak efficiency. As an individual moves through to late adulthood, these systems slowly deteriorate along with overall health, stamina and strength. In terms of cognition, thinking and problem solving skills, conceptual understandings, information processing ability and overall intelligence develop throughout an individual's lifespan. With respect to psychosocial, this includes how a person's mind, emotions, and maturity levels evolve.

In terms of this assignment, the purpose is to present a profile of a typical thirty-two year old male and to analyse his development through theoretical perspectives. My individual is named Andrew; he is single but dates regularly, Caucasian from North America, is university educated and works as an accountant for a bank. Andrew grew up in the suburbs of a medium sized city in a family with three siblings, one older brother and two older sisters. He was involved in sports as a boy, did well academically, and has lots of friends. Andrew's father was a schoolteacher however has since retired and his mother was a homemaker until Andrew was sixteen years old when she decided to pursue a part-time career. His parents are happily

married and provided a comfortable standard of living in which the children were raised.

Typical Physical Development in Emerging and Young Adulthood

Emerging and young adulthood is defined as the period from approximately twenty to forty years of age. Three criteria generally define adulthood: (1) accepting responsibility for one's choices in life, (2) making decisions independently, and (3) moving towards financial independence (Arnett, 2006). "In modern industrialised countries, the achievement of these goals takes longer and follows far more varied routes than in the past" (Papalia et al., 2009, p. 422). As a thirty-two year old male who has experienced a typical upbringing and patterns of development, Andrew is increasingly making decisions about achieving these goals, which may be influenced by his lifestyle and career decisions. During this time period in his life, genetics, health and fitness, sexuality, and socioeconomic status have been determined to influence typical physical development during young adulthood (Arnett, 2006).

The direction of an individual's physical health for the rest of their life may be established during young adulthood. Typically, genetics contributes positively to the health and development of a young adult, however it may also be influenced by behavioural factors which includes what an individual eats, whether he gets enough sleep, the amount of physical activity, and whether he drinks alcohol, smokes, or use drugs (Papalia et al., 2009).

During young adulthood, the reduction of fat consumption, especially of saturated fats, controlling cholesterol through diet and increased

cardiovascular activity are directly related to lowering risk factors of cardiovascular disease later in life (Shepherd et al., 1995). According to Daniel Levinson (1986), a theorist known for his creation of developmental stages for men and then later women, males during young adulthood typically experience excellent stamina, vigour and robust physical functioning with respect to their health. Having had yet to be subjected to age-related physical deterioration, their strength, coordination, reaction time, senses, motor skills and sexual drive are at a maximum (Levinson, 1986). While enjoying society's emphasis on youthfulness, they typically have healthy skin, all or most of their hair and well-defined muscles. Young adulthood is a time when anything seems possible and with the right attitude and energy, anything can be achieved.

Milestones during young adulthood are becoming harder to delineate and are primarily psychosocial in nature for males at this stage (Levinson, 1986). They may include marriage, having children, achieving social and vocational success, and may also vary widely across cultures and socioeconomic status as well as from one male to the next during young adulthood. The connection between socioeconomic status and health during young adulthood however is becoming more widely documented (Papalia et al., 2009). Educational achievement is also becoming recognized as a milestone for achievement during young adulthood. As high degrees of education is generally linked to elevated levels of income, individuals during young adulthood often rate their health as better than and live longer than lower income people (NCHS, 2006). Additionally, the more schooling an individual has had, the less likely the chances are he will develop or die from

communicable diseases, injuries, chronic illnesses, or that he will be a victim of homicide or commit suicide (Pamuk et al., 1998).

Typical Cognitive Development in Emerging and Young Adulthood

Theorists and researchers have studied cognitive development from a variety of perspectives. Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development (See Appendix A) are a theory about the nature and development of human intelligence. It deals with the nature of cognition and how human beings come to acquire knowledge, process it and then use it (Papalia, 2009). Work completed by Piaget set the foundation for cognitive development research and postformal thought, which suggests that thinking, is in fact much more complex than Piaget initially described in his theory. Labouvie-Vief (2006) suggests that postformal thought processes generally begins during young adulthood and is often initiated through the exposure of higher education. One such theorist who has done work in this area is K. Warner Schaie. Schaie's lifespan model of cognition (Schaie & Willis, 2000) examines the developmental usage of intellect within a social context. His seven-staged theory (See Appendix B) starts during childhood and moves through to late adulthood. His theory revolves around cognition and how individuals are motivated by goals that change during different stages in life (Papalia, 2009). These goals shift from the acquisition of information and skills to the integration of new such knowledge into our lives and then onto a search for purpose of how to use this information.

For Andrew, our thirty-two year old male, progressing through this model defines typical cognitive development in two overlapping stages. The first

stage known as the achieving stage may take place during the late teens or early twenties and continue on through to the early thirties. During this stage, young adults no longer acquire knowledge merely for its own sake but instead use what they know to pursue goals such as career and family (Papalia, 2009). As a milestone for Andrew, since he is not raising a family, as he is a single male, it would appear that he is working towards the achievement of long-term goals for personal advancement in his career and the establishment of independence. The second stage of Schaie's model describes Andrew as falling into is the executive stage. This may take place during the thirties or forties and goes through up until middle age. During this time, typically individuals' transition to spending more time being involved in the community or at the societal level (Papalia, 2009). This stage may not necessarily be exhibited in all young adults.

For Andrew, a milestone of achievement might be that he is starting to settle into his career and he is developing competencies that allow him to focus on other areas of his life so as to create more balance. Finally, one last theorist that I would like to discuss during this level of development is James Fowler. Fowler's stages of faith development (See Appendix C) proposes that individuals evolve through seven stages of belief development throughout their lifespan. For Andrew, he falls into stage four, which generally takes place between the mid-twenties and late-thirties. This is a time when an individual takes personal responsibility for his beliefs, values and feelings (Fowler, 1995). It may be a time associated with confusion and struggle as one attempts to become orientated holistically. For Andrew, while this is not

the achievement of a milestone, he may be on his way to the establishment of the redefinition of his values and morals.

Typical Psychosocial Development in Emerging and Young Adulthood

According to Erik Erikson (1993, p. 255), following the adolescent struggle with identity, social interactions and moral issues, “ the young adult, emerging from the search for and insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others. He is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit.” In Erikson’s eight-stage theory of psychosocial development (See Appendix D), young adulthood is defined by intimacy versus isolation. The young adult seeks companionship through dating and is in search of love. This is represented in Andrew’s case as he dates regularly in search of a mutually satisfying intimate relationship. If during this stage of typical development, an individual is unable to establish a satisfyingly intimate relationship, he may become withdrawn and distance himself from others as a form of a defence mechanism (Erikson, 1993).

Put forward by Robert Sternberg in his triangular theory of love (2006), the way love develops is as if it were a story; the lovers are its authors and the story they create reflects their personalities and beliefs. Sternberg (2006) proposes that there are three elements of love: intimacy, passion and commitment. Intimacy involves the willingness to reveal information about oneself to another, and can lead to feelings of connectedness and trust. Passion is motivated by physiological arousal and sexual desire.

Commitment is a cognitive element; it is the decision to love and stay in love. The degree to which each of the three elements is present determines

the depth of love an individual will experience within a relationship (Papalia, 2009).

While the search for intimacy is an important element of typical identity development during young adulthood, personality type may also play an important role in the setting and achievement of personal goals, some of which may include relationship status and career development. Jack Black has pioneered an approach, which looks at personality development as a functioning whole. In Black's typological approach, research has identified three personality types: ego-resilient, overcontrolled and undercontrolled (Papalia, 2009). An ego-resilient young adult is generally well adjusted; both mentally and emotionally stable. A child that was overcontrolled typically becomes a shy, anxious and dependent young adult; and a child that was undercontrolled generally becomes an energetic, impulsive, stubborn and easily distracted young adult (Papalia, 2009).

According to Dennissen, Asendorpt and van Aken (2008), both overcontrolled and undercontrolled types have more difficulty than ego-resilient types when assuming adult social roles; for example, establishing intimate relationships, leaving home and career development. Although personality types established during childhood may be a predictor of some behavioural patterns, events along the course of an individual's lifetime can also re-establish behavioural patterns for later in life (Caspi, 1998). As a milestone of achievement for Andrew, he was raised in a stable and comfortable environment, which has supported positive lifelong development, and he appears to be quite ego-resilient. Additionally, he is career focussed and is

dating regularly, which would imply that he is searching for a mutually satisfying intimate relationship and likely marriage.

Conclusion

Human development, the process of growing from a one-celled zygote to a mature adult human being, occurs in the physical, cognitive and psychosocial realms. Andrew, a typical thirty-two year old Caucasian male was raised by happily married parents, has three siblings and was grown up in the suburbs of a medium sized city in North America. He attended university and is now working as an accountant. Having experienced a typical upbringing, Andrew is at his peak with respect to physical performance. According to theorist Daniel Levinson (1986), a typical male at thirty-two years of age will experience good health, is physically fit and have strong sexual stamina. Anything seems possible at this point in time in Andrew's life and with the right attitude anything is achievable. Regarding cognitive development, Andrew has achieved much success working as an accountant. As he settles into his career and developing competencies at work, he can spend more time involved within his community so as to create a more balanced lifestyle. Involvement in the community will allow Andrew to reassess his belief system. While this time may be associated with some confusion, he is on his way to redefining his values and morals in a holistic sense. Finally, with respect to Andrew's psychosocial development, theorists such as Erik Erikson (1993) and Robert Sternberg (2006) suggest that young adulthood is the time when an individual is ready for intimacy. Andrew is full of passion and sexual stamina, and may be ready to settle down in a

committed relationship. The degree in which the three elements of intimacy, passion and commitment are present within a relationship will determine the depth of love Andrew may experience; the greater the depth, the more fulfilling the relationship will be for him.

References

Arnett, J. (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In J. Arnett and J. Turner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 3-19). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Caspi, A. (1998). Personality development across the life course. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol 3. Social, emotional and personality development* (5th ed., pp. 311-388). New York: Wiley.

Dennissen, J., Asendorpt, J., & van Aken, M. (2008). Childhood personality predicts long - term trajectories of shyness and aggressiveness in the context of demographic transitions in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Personality, 76*, 67- 99.

Erikson, E. (1993). *Childhood and society*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Fowler, J. (1995). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. New York: Harper Collins.

Labouvie – Vief, G. (2006). Emerging structures of adult thought. In J. Arnett & J. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 59-84). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Learning Theories Knowledgebase (2011). Stage theory of cognitive development (Piaget). Retrieved April 18, 2011 from <http://www.learning-theories.com/piagets-stage-theory-of-cognitive-development.html>.

Levinson, D. (1986). *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). (2006). *Health, United States, 2006*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Pamuk, E., Makuc, D., Heck, K., Reuben, C., & Lochner, K. (1998). Socioeconomic Status and health chartbook. In *Health, United States, 1998*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Papalia, D., Wendkos, S., & Feldman, R. (2009). *Human development*. 11th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schaie, K. W., & Willis, S. L. (2000). A stage theory model of adult cognitive development revisited. In B. Rubinstein, M. Moss, & M. Kleban (Eds.), *The many dimensions of aging: Essays in honor of M. Powell Lawton* (pp. 175-193). New York: Springer.

Shepherd, J., Cobbe, S., Ford, I., Isles, C., Lorimer, A., MacFarlane, P., McKillop, J., & Packard, C. (1995). Prevention of coronary heart disease with

pravastatin in men with hypercholesterolemia. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 333, 1301- 1307.

Sternberg, R. (2006). A duplex theory of love. In R. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 184-199). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wikipedia. (n. d.). Fowler's stages of faith development. Retrieved April 19, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fowler's_stages_of_faith_development.

Appendices

Appendix A: Jean Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget observed children and their process of making sense of the world around them in order to developed a four-stage model of how the mind processes new information. He proposed that children progress through four stages. These four stages are:

Sensorimotor stage (Birth to age 2). An infant builds the understanding of himself and reality, and how things work through interactions with its environment. He is able to differentiate between himself and other objects.

Preoperational stage (Ages 2 to 4). The child is not yet able to conceptualize abstractly and needs concrete physical situations. Objects are classified in simple ways, most often by important features.

Concrete operations (Ages 7 to 11). As physical experience accumulates, a child begins to think abstractly and conceptualize, creating logical structures that explain his experiences.

Formal operations (Beginning at ages 11 to 15). Cognition reaches its final form. By this stage, the person no longer requires concrete objects to make rational judgments. He is capable of deductive and hypothetical reasoning and his ability for abstract thinking is very similar to that of an adult.

(Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2011)

Appendix B: K. Warner Schaie's Lifespan Model of Cognition

K. Warner Schaie had developed a five-stage theory called the lifespan theory of cognition. His theory revolves around cognition and how individuals are motivated by goals that change during different stages in their lives. Importance to this process is the cognitive skills involved in monitoring an individual's self-behavior.

Acquisitive stage (Childhood and adolescence). The task of acquiring information spans all of childhood and adolescence.

Achieving stage (Late teens or early 20's through to early 30's). The task of applying an individual's intelligence to reach career and family goals during early adulthood.

Responsible stage (Late 30's to early 60's). The task of protecting career and family during and after the transition from early to middle adulthood.

Executive stage (30's or 40's through to middle age). The task of broadening focus from the personal domain to the community or societal level, typically occurring later than the responsible stage in middle adulthood but not necessarily exhibited by all adults.

Reorganizational Stage (End of middle age, beginning of late adulthood). The task of an individual who enters retirement to reorganize their life and intellectual energies around meaningful pursuits that takes the place of paid work.

Reintegrative stage (Late adulthood). The task of applying one's intelligence to issues of great personal concern during late adulthood.

Legacy-creating stage (Advanced old age). Near the end of life, once reintegration has been completed, older individuals may create instructions for the disposal of prized possessions, make funeral arrangements, provide oral histories or write their life stories as a legacy for their loved ones.

(Papalia, 2009)

Appendix C: James Fowler's Stages of Faith Development

Emphasising the development of an individual's beliefs and values systems through a holistic perspective, James Fowler created his seven-stage theory of faith development. Stage 0: Primal or Undifferentiated faith (Birth to age 2). Characterized by the early learning about the degree of safety in an environment (for example, safety versus neglect), if consistent nurturing is experienced, an individual will develop a sense of trust and safety about the

universe and the divine. Conversely, negative experiences will cause an individual to develop distrust with the universe and in the divine.

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective faith (Ages 3 to 7). This stage is characterized by the psyche's unprotected exposure to the unconscious.

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal faith (Mostly in school children). During stage two, the individual has a strong belief in justice, reciprocity of the universe and deities.

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional faith (Adolescence). This stage is characterized by conformity.

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective faith (Usually mid-twenties to late thirties). A stage defined by angst and struggle. The individual takes personal responsibility for his or her beliefs and feelings.

Stage 5: Conjunctive faith (Mid-life crisis). The individual acknowledges paradox and transcendence relating reality behind the symbols of inherited systems

Stage 6: Universalizing faith (Mid-life through to late adulthood). An individual reaches a stage in their development of faith of which some might call enlightenment.

(Wikipedia, n. d.)

Appendix D: Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

According to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1993), successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and interactions with others. Inability to successfully complete a stage may result in a further inability to complete subsequent stages and perhaps an unhealthy sense of self. However, stages may be resolved successfully at a later time.

Trust Versus Mistrust (Birth to ages 12-18). Baby develops a sense of whether the world is a good and/or safe place. Virtue: hope.

Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (Ages 12-18). The child develops a balance of independence and self-sufficiency over shame and guilt. Virtue: will.

Initiative versus Guilt (Ages 3-6). The child develops initiative when trying out new activities and is not overwhelmed by guilt. Virtue: purpose.

Industry vs. Inferiority (Ages 6 to puberty). The child must learn skills of their culture or face feelings of incompetence. Virtue: skill.

Identity vs. Role Confusion (Puberty to young adulthood). The adolescent must determine his own sense of self or experience confusion about roles. Virtue: fidelity.

Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young adulthood). An individual seeks to make commitments to others: if unsuccessful, may suffer from isolation and self-absorption. Virtue: love.

Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle adulthood). The mature adult is

concerned with establishing and guiding the next generation or else feels personal impoverishment. Virtue: care.

Ego Integrity vs. Despair (Late adulthood). The older adult achieves acceptance in his life, allowing acceptance of death or else despairs over an inability to relive life. Virtue: wisdom. (Papalia, 2009).