

Perspective paper

Psychology



Perspectives on Human Development: Psychoanalytic, Learning, and Ecological Systems
Fall 18 October Introduction How do humans develop and what are the factors that drive their development? Several theories attempt to explain the forces that direct human development. This paper discusses three perspectives: Psychoanalytic, Learning, and Ecological Systems. They are different in their perceptions regarding the critical themes of nature/nurture, continuous/discontinuous, and active/passive development, due to their differences on the views of human nature and their interactions with their environment.

Main Concepts of Human Development Perspectives

Psychoanalytic Perspective

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory. Freud argued that the human unconscious is a reservoir of primitive aggressive and sexual drives, and that these drives dominantly build up human behavior. He stressed that human development is full of sexual conflicts and abnormal behaviors come from childhood conflicts that were not correctly resolved. He also believed that at the age of 5 or 6, people have already established their personalities. Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory proposed three elements of human personality: the id, ego, and superego. Of the three, only the id is present once people are born, and it aims to immediately satisfy inborn biological instincts. The ego is the conscious and rational part of personality, which facilitates the development of perception, learning, and memory. Its main role is to find socially appropriate ways that can satisfy the demands of the id. The superego serves as the conscience of human beings and is normally developed during childhood. Freud proposed five stages of human development: Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latency, and Genital.

Erikson's Psychosocial Development

Psychosocial development theory asserts that the ego has a critical role in shaping human development. Erikson believed that the ego

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behaves autonomously in helping people make sense of their experiences and attain lasting personality traits. Unlike Freud, he stressed that children are active learners, who adjust to and learn from their environment. The psychosocial development theory discusses eight stages of human development: Trust versus Mistrust, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, Initiative versus Guilt, Industry versus Inferiority, Role Confusion, Intimacy versus Isolation, Generativity versus Stagnation, and Integrity versus Despair.

Learning Perspective Skinner's Operant Conditioning. Skinner proposed that animals and humans repeat acts that lead to favorable effects, while they suppress the ones that lead to unfavorable consequences. In operant conditioning, reinforcers are stimuli that lead to repeating previous actions, while punishers reduce the probability that an action will be repeated in the future. Positive reinforcement pertains to something agreeable that is introduced to the environment, after getting a specific response. For negative reinforcement, a specific behavior is rewarded through removing something disagreeable in the environment. Negative reinforcement is dissimilar from punishment because for the former, an unpleasant event is eliminated to elicit a conditioned response, but for punishment, a disagreeable consequence seeks to remove a certain behavior.

Bandura's Social Cognitive. Bandura argued that animal studies cannot explain human development because people are cognitive beings, who actively process information before reacting to them. He stressed that observational learning is critical to the learning process of humans. He asserted that children constantly learn new and bad behaviors through learning, which explains varied differences in their attitudes and behaviors. In addition, Bandura proposed the concept of reciprocal determinism, where

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human development is a product of the interaction among people's cognitive processes, the environment, and people's behaviors. Ecological Systems Perspective Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development.

Bronfenbrenner proposed a model that integrated the dynamics of environmental and biological features in shaping human development. This model asserts that development is a continuous change process, where biopsychological factors shape a growing human identity. The Bioecological Model uses concentric circles that represent the different systems within the environment. These systems influence a child's development. The four systems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Furthermore, human development is involved in a process with bidirectional actions. A bidirectional view shows that changes in one element affects or changes another element and vice-versa. In addition, Bronfenbrenner believed that a child's development is also affected by larger social forces, including their communities and cultures. Differences and Similarities in Themes Nature/Nurture Psychoanalytic theories generally believe that nature drives human development, while learning and ecological systems theories maintained that the environment, and not biology, controls human development. Freud asserted that nature, specifically violent and sexual instincts, shapes human development. Erikson agreed that unresolved psychosocial conflicts drive human development. Still, both Erikson and Freud believed that people also react to their instincts and seek to become rational masters of their drives. Learning theories showed that the environment is the most important aspect of human development. Skinner asserted that since organisms learn from their environment, the environment drives human behavior. Bandura did not completely agree with <https://assignbuster.com/perspective-paper/>

Skinner. He offered the concept of reciprocal determinism, where human development is a product of the interaction among people's cognitive processes, the environment, and people's behaviors. He claimed that people also reacted to their environment and this affects their development.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development stressed that nature greatly impacts how human beings develop. The environment of a person affects the attitudes and practices of human beings. However, to some degree, Bronfenbrenner indicated that people also contribute to the development of and changes in their systems. Continuous/Discontinuous

Both learning and ecological systems theories see development as continuous, while psychoanalysis views it as discontinuous. Learning theories assert that development is continuous because the environment refines people's learning. Every time they learn from their environment, they are further developed. For psychoanalysis, development stops at the age of 5 or 6. By this time, children already developed their abilities to respond to their instincts. Erikson, however, thinks that development occurs until old age.

Ecological systems theory thinks that development is both continuous and discontinuous. It is continuous because the environment and people continue to interact and to affect each other until old age, but this is not always the case for people who have stopped learning from and affecting their

environments. Active/Passive Development Psychoanalytic and ecological systems theories indicate that children are passive and active learners, while learning theories emphasize the passive aspect of learning. Psychoanalytic theories believe that children respond to their strong inner drives. However, they also learn social norms which they can use to develop controls for the id. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development argued that the

individual is the center of development and that four primary systems interrelate with it to affect its development. The individual also shapes these environments through their own efforts, or through their interactions with people who shape these systems. Learning theories think that children are passive learners. People can control factors that can shape learning, which will affect their behaviors. Conclusion Different theoretical perspectives offer diverse notions on human development. Psychoanalytic theories generally believe that nature drives human development, while learning and ecological systems theories maintained that the environment, and not biology, controls human development. Furthermore, both psychoanalytic and learning perspectives present a modular aspect of human development, while ecological systems perspective offers a holistic view. Finally, psychoanalytic and ecological systems theories indicate that children are passive and active learners, while learning theories highlight the passive aspect of learning. Hence, these theories offer different paradigms in understanding and facilitating children's development as competent human beings. Bibliography Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. (2007). Theories of human development. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. Salkind, N. J. (2004). An introduction to theories of human development. California: SAGE. Shaffer, D. R., & Kipp, K. (2010). Chapter 2: Theories of human development. In *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence*. California: Wadsworth/Cengage.