

Theories of development

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



There are many branches of psychology. The field of human development is divided into five theory groups. The theory groups are Psychodynamic, Cognitive, Systems, Biological and Behavioral. Each theory group has many contributing theorists. Some theories overlap while others are independent. Often theories are credible whereas others cause skepticism. There are many contributors to the world of psychology with different views and beliefs about human development. Psychodynamic Theory Sigmund Freud was one of the most influential contributors to the field of psychology.

Freud was born in 1856, in Moravia. In 1881, Freud received a doctorate in medicine. Freud's main focus of study was neurology; this led him to begin concentrating his research on nervous disorders. Freud's research brought him to his psychoanalytical theory. Freud's theory suggests that an individual's unconscious processes or thoughts contribute to one's personality and influences one's behavior. Freud's theory included the concept that personality is composed of three elements: the id (pleasure seeker), the ego (deals with reality), and the superego (one's sense of right and wrong).

Freud also believed that human development consisted of five psychosexual stages: the oral stage (birth-18 months), anal stage (18 months-3 years), phallic stage (3-6 years), latency stage (6-12 years), and the genital stage (12 years and up). The theory included the belief that if one wants to develop a healthy personality, one has to complete all five psychosexual stages successfully. Another great contributor to the Psychodynamic field of psychology is Erik Erickson. Erickson was born in 1902, in Germany. Erickson travelled around Europe and attended the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute.

Erickson was intrigued by Freud's theory, however Erickson believed that development occurred throughout one's life and that one's personality is shaped consciously from social interactions. Erickson developed the psychosocial theory of personality development. The theory includes eight stages of development: Trust vs. mistrust (birth-12 months), Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (12 months-3 years), Initiative vs. guilt (3-6 years), Industry vs. inferiority (6-12 years), Ego identity vs. ego diffusion (12-18 years or older), Intimacy vs. isolation (18-40 years), Generativity vs. self-absorption (40-65 years), and Integrity vs. despair (65 years and older). According to Craig and Dunn (2010), Erickson's theory emphasizes social interactions and argues that a distinct part of each individual is based on the culture in which the individual is raised, depending heavily on the individual's interactions with caregivers during infancy. Social forces continue to shape personality throughout the life as the individual experiences relationships with others (p. 13).

Cognitive Theory

The cognitive theory attempts to explain human behavior. This theory of psychology tries to understand the thought process behind one's personality or behavior. Two of the main cognitive theorists are Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Both theorists have come a long way to help us understand the cognitive theory. The cognitive approach to psychology has shown a lot of advancement from the contributions made by Piaget and Vygotsky. They have set the foundation for other theorists to do more research. Vygotsky and Piaget had similar thoughts on how children learn.

Both theorists believed that children learn and think differently than adults and that children learn actively, through hands-on experiences. Piaget

suggested that children think differently than adults. He developed this belief from observations and his stage theory of development. He was one of the first theorists to state that children are actively gaining their own knowledge of the world. Piaget often referred to children as “ little scientists”. The reason behind the nickname is Piaget believed that children in free play were conducting their own “ experiments” in the world to gain their own knowledge from it.

One way that Piaget believed that children were learning object permanence, was by rolling a ball into the other room and then going to get it. This was the natural way for children to learn from their own “ experiment”. Piaget developed a theory of cognitive development, known as the Development Stage Theory. Piaget’s theory is broken into four stages. Stage one is the sensorimotor stage, which occurs from birth to two years of age. Children use their five senses and movement to experience the world. Children are completely egocentric.

Stage two, Preoperational Thought Stage, occurs from 2 years of age to seven years old. They must be able to organize their own thoughts and ideas. The third stage is Concrete operations stage, from seven years old to eleven years old. This stage of thinking becomes organized on a mental plane. The fourth and final stage of Piaget’s theory is formal operations. This stage occurs from age eleven to adulthood. Thinking goes into the realm of purely abstract and hypothetical (Crain, 2011). Vygotsky was a psychologist; his interest was developmental psychology, child development and education.

Vygotsky also studied children’s play. Vygotsky was a Marxist; a person that believes that we can understand humans only in the context of the social-

historical environment (Crain, 2011, p. 224). Vygotsky presented the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the range in which a child can complete tasks on their own and tasks that they can complete with guidance from adults to assist. The ZPD captures a child's cognitive level of maturation (Crain, 2011). This method is guidance assistance; the children gain new skills with minimal assistance.

This method helps each child develop equally in the classroom. Biological Theory Biological Foundations of Human Development influence the course of development throughout an individual's lifetime. Some developmental processes include growth during the prenatal period, the onset of puberty, and when a person gets their first grey hair. Most development through the life is a result of successive interactions between biology and experience. (Craig & Dunn, 2010, p. 4) There are factors of biological development that considers maturation, ethology, and attachment.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau introduced several keys into developmental theory and proposed a biological timetable that included these components. Maturation, a theory created by Gesell, is the development of growth and aging over time and depends heavily on biological processes. The theory states that development has a preordained sequence, that the rates vary but the sequence does not, and depends heavily on the internal make up and the environment. The theory basically suggests that development begins in the womb. The theory continues on to measure the development of a child in the first few years of life.

Maturation definitions include reciprocal intervening, functional asymmetry, self-regulation, individuality, proximodistal, ontogeny/phylogeny, patterning
<https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-development/>

and others. Ethological theories have major influences on biological development. Ethology is the study of behavior within the evolutionary framework. It is the science of animal behavior and the study of human behavior and social organization from a biological standpoint. The theory states that how a person thinks is passed down genetically. Learning has a small role in this theory.

Charles Darwin, who wrote the "Theory of Evolution", is included in this theory. Though controversial, Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest and natural selection shows that evolution is a major factor in a person's development. Evolution is factual and gives people the genetics that create skin color, height, etc. Konrad Lorenz wrote, "Modern Ethology" and discovered the idea of imprinting. He showed that this is a critical bonding period when animals are born. Animals bond with the first thing they see after they are born, be it their mother or any caregiver.

Lorenz studied with Nikolaas Tinbergen and they won a Nobel Prize for their work with animal patterns. Ethology includes naturalistic observation, instinctive behavior, and imprinting. Systems Theory Ludwig von Bertalanffy originally proposed general systems theory, in 1928. Bertalanffy was born and grew up in a little town near Vienna. He grew up in a wealthy family and had private tutors. After Bertalanffy's parents divorced, he found a new example to follow, Paul Kemmerer, a famous biologist. Kemmerer was Bertalanffy's neighbor. Kemmerer soon became an example for Bertalanffy.

Bertalanffy attended the University of Vienna. At this time he had to choose between studying philosophy and science. Bertalanffy chose to become a biologist. Bertalanffy was a professor at many universities. Many early

theorists that studied about system's theory aimed their work and research to find a general system's theory that would explain all the systems in all of the fields of science. Bertalanffy developed the "Allgemeine Systemlehre". The "Allgemeine Systemlehre" is a German term that means a system that can be applied in a number of fields. He did not like when it translated into "General Systems Theory".

His idea cut across what is known as the Weltanschauung, or worldview that entails Epistemological (study of nature), ontological (relating to existence), and ethical implications. Systems can be controlled or uncontrolled. Today researchers are still using the studies and findings from Bertalanffy. Other researchers of the system's theory are Barker, "Behavior Settings" and Learner who did work on life expectancy and environment and wrote, "Developmental Systems Theory." A most recent theory used in social development today is the use of the four stage model of development.

It is a major model used in the measurement from birth to adulthood. The four stages are co-dependant (0-8 months), counter dependant (9-36 months), independent (3-6 years), and interdependent (6-29 years). The most current happenings in system's research include how environmental factors and culture influence adolescent development. The five theory groups of human development have led to many breakthroughs in psychology. There are many theorists that have contributed to the five theory groups. However, there are also theorists that are considered to be the founders of each group.

All of the theories are relative and may help explain human development, including one's personality or behavior.

<https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-development/>

Works Cited

1. Crain, W. (2011). Theories of development: Concepts and applications. (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
2. Craig, G. J. , & Dunn, W. L. (2010). Understanding human development. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
3. Mike Wade (October 18, 2005) Theories used in Research General System Theories <http://www.istheory.yorku.ca/generalsystemstheory.htm>
4. Walonick, David S. (1993) General Systems Theory. <http://www.statpac.org/walonick/systems-theory.htm>