

Theories of adolescence

Education



Theories of Adolescence Theories of Adolescence What is Adolescence?

Adolescence is a time when children begin developing into adults and being their own person. It is during this period that individuals embark on the process of establishing their own identities and in the process, they can at times become quite rebellious and are usually prone to a myriad of peer influences that can create conflict between the children and their parents. While establishing their own identities, adolescents start moving towards the establishment of economic and social independence, start acquiring the skills that are necessary for helping to carry out adult roles and relationships in addition to developing the capacity for abstract reasoning. In addition to these developments, individuals going through the process of adolescence often experience a number of physical and sexual maturation changes. The adolescence stage of human development generally starts at puberty before eventually ending at the age of between 18 and 21 years.

Theories of Adolescence

One of the main theories of adolescence is Erik Erikson's psycho-social theory of personality development. The core concept that is seen to be presented by Erikson's theory is that the most essential characteristic of adolescence in humans is the undergoing of an identity crisis and the subsequent acquisition of an ego identity. Erikson argues that during the adolescent stage of development, individuals must establish a sense of personal identity in addition to avoiding the dangers seen to be posed by identity confusion and role diffusion (Ratele & Duncan, 2003).

In my personal experience, I support the postulations made by Erikson's psycho-social theory of personality development as they match my own personal experiences while I was undergoing through this stage of

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development. During my adolescent years, I underwent an identity crisis as I was easily impressionable and often tried to copy the behavior and characteristics of the “cool” kids in school and some of the characters in my favorite TV show. Although it took some considerable time, I was eventually able to develop my own unique identity.

Another key theory of Adolescence is Roger Barker's Somatopsychological theory of adolescence (Guerrero and Chávez, 2009). According to Barker, during adolescence changes affecting an individual's endocrinology, physique and body dimensions experienced at a significantly accelerated rate as compared to the rate at which they were experienced during the individual's preadolescent years. As a result of these changes, a number of corresponding psychological situations often tend to occur. These include the development of new psychological and experiential situations in which there is a general overlapping of the psychological field.

I support the premise of this theory as in the American culture that I grew up in, children and adults are categorized as different groups and different forms of behavior are generally accepted from the members of each group. As a young adult, I quickly came to realize that more was being expected of me and that I was expected to drop some of the childhood behavioral characteristics that I had developed over the years and adopt adult behaviors. At first, it was difficult for me to advance and move from one social group to the other as the possibility of movement is primarily determined by an individual's physique. However, as my physique developed and I adopted more adult like behavioral characteristics, I finally came to be accepted as an adult.

References

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