

# Observation on 3-4 years old

Psychology



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## HERE HERE YOUR HERE HERE Observation of Four-Year-Old Child

Observation of a four-year-old child carrying out conservation tasks largely supported Jean Piaget's theory of the preoperational child. All three tasks were performed and in only one, the experiment involving pennies, did the child understand differences when volumes were extracted. The experiment involving dough and, especially, liquid conservation showed a lack of cognitive logic at this stage of preoperational development.

The experiment involving water involved two exactly similar-sized and shaped containers that held exactly the same volume of water. In full view of the child, the water from one container was poured into a thinner and taller container. After extracting the liquid, the child was asked as to which one held more water. The child was adamant that the taller container held more water, which he reaffirmed three different times. This child was not able to conserve as it pertained to liquid and volume.

The second experiment involved dough clumps which were first balled into circles of exactly the same size and circle shape. In full view of the child, one of the dough masses was rolled out on the surface of the table into what resembled a long snake. Immediately afterward, the four-year-old was asked which piece of dough had more. Without reservation, the child pointed toward the snake-like object, which he reaffirmed twice. This again supports Piaget's theory that a child does not maintain higher abstract reasoning or cognitive functioning needed to understand that the dough remained the same even though its shape had been changed.

For the penny experiment, two groups of exactly eight pennies were shown to the child, with each segment laid out exactly the same. The researcher indicated to the child that there were exactly eight pennies in each pile. Two

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experiments were performed here: First, the second group of pennies were pulled from their circular formation and laid end to end next to the circular segment. The child informed the researcher that the longer pile of pennies maintained more. For the second experiment, one group of eight pennies was put into a narrow and tall beaker in full view of the four-year-old. The other group was also placed in a column structure, however the researcher placed them on a one inch book to make them look taller. In this experiment, the child did understand that they had not changed and both maintained the same volume.

It could be that the book represented a variable that changed the cognitive processing of the youth, however despite this, the participant showed no signs of conservation skills and reinforced Piaget's position on cognitive develop for this stage. It would seem that the child needs to understand the basic concepts of mathematical reasoning in order to maintain these logic processing abilities related to conservation. The researcher, in reflection, mentioned that this same experiment would be tested on another child and the participant grew frustrated about the prospect. Therefore, full shedding of egocentric behaviors might be necessary before conservation skills can be mastered effectively, though this is only theoretical.