

# Comparing erikson to piaget

Psychology



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Piaget and Erikson's Theories of Development Piaget viewed child's development with four stages of cognitive growth. The four stages include sensory stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage. According to Piaget, it is the process of maturation that dictates the progress of the child through the four stages.

The first stage of Piaget's cognitive growth is the sensory stage. The children learn through motor or reflex actions in which their thoughts are drawn from sensation and movement. The second stage is the preoperational stage which the children begin to use symbols to embody objects. During this stage, the children are influenced by fantasies and have difficulty conceptualizing time. The third stage of Piaget's cognitive development is the concrete operational stage. During this stage, the children learn to think abstractly and make rational judgments when they observe an experience. The children's accommodation during this stage increases. The last stage of Piaget's cognitive development is the formal operational stage which brings the children's cognition in its final shape. The children during this stage already knew how to reason out deductively and capable of hypothetical reasoning (Piaget's Cognitive Stages, 1990).

Erikson, a famous psychoanalyst stated eight stages of development. He believed that each of us forms our basic belief about ourselves and how we associate with others socially. These basic beliefs formed will eventually control us on how we make our choice as we associate or form relationship with others. Erikson described each of the eight stages of development as a choice between two opposing beliefs. He believed that child's ego subsists from birth and that his behavior is not totally self-protective. Erikson believed that the interaction of the body, mind and cultural influences

determine the way of development.

### Differences and Similarities

Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget are two of the famous theorists who focused their interest in children and the stages of their development. Both of them searched to explain the cognitive and psychosocial development of children. Both Piaget and Erikson have a significant impact in psychology. Piaget concluded that children “construct” knowledge by exploring the world by making and testing assumptions. Erikson developed a comprehensive model of development of children’s social capacities. However, in Erikson’s developmental theory, he showed that in the early stages of development there are difficulties that affect the social and emotional adjustments of children in the later. On the other hand, Piaget’s theory of development led to a broader understanding of the development of intellectual and moral judgment (A History Lesson, n. d.).

Jean Piaget developed his cognitive stages and stated that a child understands information that fits into his own view of world. However, when this information does not fit into his established view of world, the child reexamines and adjusts the way he is thinking to accommodate the new information. According to Erik Erikson, early childhood is described by initiative versus guilt. In this stage, the children are trying out new things and discovering who they are. As the children take the initiative to move out, their energy allows them to forget their disappointments and failures and still try new ideas and interests. Both of them view that if a child fails, the child will still try to accommodate and reexamine the information (The Developmental Psychology, n. d.).

Piagets and Eriksons explanations of social and moral development

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One of the most famous theories in Psychology is Piaget's theory of cognitive development. His theory of cognitive development remains viewed and respected until today. He thought that children think differently than how adults do. However, some of his ideas in his theory did not stand the test of time. He viewed the role of maturation as very important to understand the world. However, researchers have found that in today's children, Piaget's observation is not applicable anymore. Children today are believed to develop some cognitive skills at a faster pace than Piaget's believed (Zimbardo, Johnson & McCann, 2008).

There are many studies done on Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages. One of the questions raised in his theory is his belief of identity formation such as those who rediscover and develop a different understanding of their life. His theory is still used as framework for analyzing developmental histories of children. It is still applicable to children today, but critics say that his theory is more pertinent to boys than girls. It is said that though his theory is claimed to be a life-span theory, he paid more attention to infancy and childhood than to adult life (Cramer, Flynn, and LaFave, 1997).

#### References:

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