

# Developmental Psychology

## Effect of Early Childhood Deprivation on Development

- Deprived of contact w/ caregiver

### Monkey studies – Harlow

- Effects depend on period of life and duration
- First 3 months: Emotional shock when returned to a group housing setting; anxious but recovered quickly
- First 6 months: Emotional shock when returned, but did not recover
- Second 6 months: Aggression when returned to a group housing setting, but recovered
- First 12 months: Never recovered; social misfits – aggressive and anxious

### Orphanage studies

- Goldfarb: Examined the diff in early adoptees (first 3 months) and later adoptees (>3 years)
  - o Later adoptees had more social, emotional and cognitive damage
  - o Effects were seen at age 12
    - Damage is long-lasting, irreversible
  - o Cognitive:
    - Conceptualise
    - IQ
    - Speech development
  - o Social and emotional:
    - Relationship and stability
    - Deviant behaviour
- Rutter: Adoptees from Romania (early vs late) vs UK
  - o Quasi experiments: Matched them on the socio-economic status of families
  - o Romanian children had hindered development; more so for those adopted late
    - Weight, height, head circumference, IQ
    - Those adopted earlier caught up quicker
    - Persistent deficit: Even when weight and height were largely caught up @6 y.o., head circumference remained small
      - Due to hindered brain development?
      - Correlated w/ hindered IQ still
- PND: Lower engagement w/ child
  - o Lower speech development, IQ
  - o Lower emotional and social development → higher cortisol levels

### Low socio-economic status

- Linked to lower cognitive and social and emotional development
- Lower levels of education, higher crime

### Interventions

- Headstart: Short term pre-school program
  - o Encouraged parental engagement
  - o Led to short term increase in IQ
  - o Long term development of social skills
- Early Headstart: Earlier start than headstart; <3 y.o., short term pre-school program
- Abecedarian Project: Early intervention - <3 y.o., long term (5 years)

- Focussed on language development, encouraged parental involvement
- → Long term increase in IQ
- Improvement in social and emotional skills
- Higher graduation rates and lower u/e rates

## Research Designs

### Pros and cons of each

- Longitudinal: Select group throughout life
  - Time consuming
  - Selective attrition
  - However shows effect of age
- Cross-sectional: Cross-section of different ages
  - Quick
  - Does not show effect of age as there is cohort variation – diff cohorts may differ due to changes e.g. technology
- Longitudinal-sequential: Select groups @ diff ages followed for a short period of time
  - Time effective
  - Shows effect of age
  - Also allows comparison of cohort at same age

### Design Issues

- Internal validity
- External validity
- Selective attrition
- Observer bias: Presence of observer may affect results

## Theories of Development

### Distinctions

- Continuous/discontinuous
  - Periods of development
- Nature/nurture
  - Interactionist – bit of both
    - Constructivist – born w/o knowledge but constructs

### *Piaget's Stage Theory*

- Discontinuous stages of development
- Universal
- Must progress from stage to stage
- Constructivist

### Stages

- Sensorimotor (0-2 years)
  - Reflexes developing into symbolic thought
  - Does certain actions to obtain certain response
  - Working on object permanence; 8-9 months according to Piaget
  - Established as ~3 months
- Preoperational (3-7 years)
  - Egocentric thinking
    - Animism; all things that move are alive

- Centralism: focus on most prominent thing
  - Fail to perspective-take
- 3 mountains task
- Conservation task – only think in one dimension
- Concrete operations (7-11 years)
  - Ability to decentralise – reversible thinking
- Formal operations (11+ years)
  - Ability to form abstract thought
  - Criticise and evaluate own thoughts
  - Creative

#### Criticisms

- Overestimates adults – they sometimes fail logical thinking tests as well
- Continuous development
- Underestimates children
- Cross-cultural differences; not universal
  - Some cultures are more developed in certain areas

#### Present Constructivist Theories

- Interactionist
- Cross cultural variation
- Development of domain general executive function and domain specific skills

#### Vygotsky's Sociocultural/Contextual Theory

- Development due to interaction of self w/ context – social and cultural context
- Affects development and individuality
  - Collectivist vs individualist culture
- Main effect of culture is language – determines way of thinking e.g. future-futureless
- Cultural tools e.g. language, method of problem solving affects development
- Zone of proximal development – difference between achievement and potential w/ guidance vs achievement alone

#### Bandura's Social Learning Theory

- Development is due to learning; learning by reinforcement/punishment as well as vicarious learning through observation and vicarious reinforcement

#### Moral Judgement

##### Piaget

- Externally regulated: Arbitrary, absolutist, does not take context into consideration
- Self regulated: Based on own values, takes context into consideration

##### Kohlberg

- Pre-conventional: Arbitrary, absolutist – right/wrong mindset
- Conventional: Judgements based off fairness and equity – assumes law is fair
- Post-conventional: Judgement of human rights – realisation that laws aren't always fair

#### Theory of Mind

- Realising that others' behaviour is due to separate beliefs and values than self
- False belief test

