

## PSYU1102: Introduction to Psychology II – Notes Preview

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## Week 2 – Social and Emotional Development

### Readings

Revel Psychology, Ch.10

#### 10.1: Human Development

- Key stages of brain development are infancy to early adulthood
- Positive life events can have as much impact as early deprivation. Children surviving trauma have every chance of being well-adjusted due to this

#### Cross-Sectional vs. Longitudinal Studies in Developmental Psychology

- The Cohort Effect: Groups that lived during different time periods (a.k.a., cohorts), can differ from other cohorts. If measuring change during the aging process, it is best to not use cross-sectional design as different cohorts have different experiences
- In Longitudinal designs, psychologists track the progress of the same cohort over time. This examines developmental effect.
- When longitudinal designs are impractical, cross-sectional should be used (with caution) in the study of developmental psychology

#### Terms:

**Nature via Nurture:** Genetic predispositions leading us to create and select our environment

**Gene expression:** The way genes turn on in response to environmental leads

**Epigenetics:** The study of changes in someone due to modification of gene expression, rather

than modification of genetic code

**Post Hoc Fallacy:** The mistake of believing that A caused B simply because A came before B

## 10.2: Conception and Pre-Natal Development

### Stages of Prenatal Development

- Zygote: Fertilised egg
- Blastocyst: Cluster of cells prior to formation of embryo
- Embryo: Body begins to take form, 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> week of development
- Fetus: Major organs formed, heart beats, 9<sup>th</sup> week of development

### Obstacles to Fetal Development

- Premature birth can result in delayed or inhibited development. Most premature babies, especially those born after 32 weeks gestation, manage to not suffer long-term consequences
- Low birthweight (under 2.5kg) is linked to physical and psychological health problems, including depression and anxiety. It is difficult to draw a causal arrow, as other factors may influence both birthweight and health.
- Exposure to teratogens can lead to behavioural, physical, and psychological disorders in babies. Anxiety and depression can also act as teratogens due to potential negative effects on prenatal development

**Terms:**

**Menarche:** Onset of menstruation

**Spermarche:** First ejaculation

## 10.3 Cognitive Development

### Components of Cognitive Development Theories

- Acquiring understanding
  - o Stage-like: spurts of knowledge
  - o Continuous: gradual increase
- Distinction of domain
  - o Domain-general: changes in cognitive skill affects all/most areas of cognition
  - o Domain-specific: cognitive skills develop independently of other domains (e.g. reasoning, language)
- Source of learning
  - o Physical experience: we learn by moving around the world
  - o Social interaction: we learn by engagement with others
  - o Biological maturation: innate mental capacity

### Piaget's Theory

- Stage-like and domain-general
- Emphasised importance of physical world in learning
- Maximum cognitive development is ability to reason logically about hypothetical issues
- Proposed cognitive change is driven by the need for **equilibration**: a balance between our experience of the world and our understanding of it
- Two processes used in equilibration are:

- Assimilation: Assimilating new experiences into our current understanding of the world
- Accommodation: The alteration of beliefs of the world to make compatible with experience of the world
- **4 Stages of Cognitive Development:**
  - Sensorimotor (0y – 2y): No thought past immediate physical experience. No object permanence or deferred imitation.
  - Preoperational (2y – 7y): Can think past immediate physical experience, but unable to perform mental transformation. Egocentric
  - Concrete Operational (7y – 11y): Able to perform mental transformation on physical object
  - Formal Operational (11y+): Develops hypothetical and abstract reasoning
- **Terms:**
  - **Object Permanence:** Ability to understand objects still exist when unseen
  - **Deferred Imitation:** Ability to copy another's previously-performed action
  - **Mental Transformation** (Mental Operations): Ability to perceive consequences of hypothetical scenarios
  - **Egocentrism:** Inability to see the world from other's perspective

#### **Inaccuracies in Piaget's Theory**

- Development is found to be more continuous than stage-like
- Development is more domain-specific than domain-general
- Poor replication of studies – perhaps due to inefficient design

#### **Lev Vygotsky's Contributions**

- **Scaffolding:** Providing full support/structure to a child whilst learning, then removing support/structure gradually to assist child in learning
- **Zone of Proximal Development:** learning phase where child benefits from instruction – they can learn but are not yet successful at implementation
- No domain-general stages
- Emphasised social interaction in learning

#### **Modern Position on Cognitive Development**

- Acquired rather than innate knowledge
- Gradual learning, rather than stage-like
- Domain-specific
- We now know that infants (as young as 5 months) display signs of object permanence
- Social learning combined with physical learning is most successful

#### **Cognition in Adolescence**

- Development of prefrontal cortex – more risky and impulsive behaviour
- Higher social reward due to higher activity in limbic structure of brain
- Not more likely to risk-take than children, but presented with more opportunity to do so

### **10.4 Social and Moral Development**

#### **Major Temperament Styles:**

- **Easy** infants: 40% of babies are relaxed, adaptable

- **Difficult** infants: 10% of babies are fussy, frustrated
- **Slow-to-warm-up** infants: 15% of babies gradually adjust to new stimuli
- The remaining 35% of children do not fit neatly into categories

#### Attachment Styles:

- **Secure:** 60% of infants in Western Culture use mum as a source of comfort. Sad when she leaves, happy when she returns. Grow up secure, well adjusted, helpful, empathetic
- **Insecure-avoidant:** 15-20% of infants in WC show indifference to mum leaving and returning
- **Insecure-anxious:** 15-20% of infants in WC panic at mum's departure, but experience mixed emotions on her return (reaching for her yet squirming to leave)
- **Disorganised:** 10-15% of infants in WC react to mum's departure and are dazed at her return
- Secure attachment more likely to grow up secure, well adjusted, helpful, empathetic. Anxious attachment more likely to be disliked by peers
- Many infants switch attachment styles over short periods
- 40% of children have different attachment to mother than to father

#### Parenting Styles

- **Permissive:** Lenient, gives freedom, showers with love and sparingly punishes
- **Authoritarian:** Strict, less freedom, frequent punishment and less affection
- **Authoritative:** Best features of authoritarian and permissive combined. Supportive of children but firm and have boundaries
- **Uninvolved:** Little affection or punishment
- Authoritative parenting provides best outcome for children in WC, whereas uninvolved provides least best outcome
- The *average expectable environment* is an environment of affection and discipline, and is most conducive to well-behaved children and well-adjusted adults

#### Kohlberg's Moral Stages

- **Pre-conventional:** Focussed on reward vs. punishment. If it is rewarded, it is right
- **Conventional:** Focussed on societies approval vs. disapproval. If it is approved of, it is right
- **Post-conventional:** Focussed on internal moral principles. If it aligns with my values, it is right

#### Age Stages:

- **Biological age:** How well a person's biology is functioning
- **Psychological age:** Mental attitudes, agility and emotional stability
- **Functional age:** Ability to function in given roles
- **Social age:** A person's age in relation to socially appropriate behaviours for age groups

#### Terms:

**Theory of Mind:** Ability to understand that other's perspectives can differ from ones own

**Contact Comfort:** Positive emotion due to physical touch

## Lecture

### Social and Emotional Development

#### Contributions

- **Piaget's Theory:**
  - Stage theorist
  - Major differences in cognition between children and adults
  - Object permanence
  - **Equilibration:** A harmony between our knowledge of the world and what we observe of the world. This is achieved by:
    - **Assimilation:** New information assimilated into current world view
    - **Accommodation:** Current world view altered to accommodate new information
  - **Four Stages of Intellectual Growth**
    1. Sensory-motor intelligence (0-2y)
      - Object permanence
    2. Pre-operational intelligence (2-7y)
      - Mental representations but illogical, egocentric
    3. Concrete operations (7-11y)
      - Mental operations for physical materials (non-abstract, e.g. can add/subtract, although cannot do algebra)
    4. Formal operations (11y)
      - Hypothetical reasoning, abstract mental operations
  - Criticisms of theory
    - Under-estimated children's abilities due to complex tasks
    - Western bias
    - No consideration for context/caregivers
- **Vygotsky's Theory**
  - Focused on social influence on learning
  - Zone of Proximal Development
- **Information Processing Approach**
  - Learning is compared to a computer with neural networks

#### Object Permanence

- 0 - 8 months
  - If object is out of sight, no effort to retrieve hidden object – infant has no object permanence
- 9– 12 months
  - Will search for object, but only in last place it is seen. If object is not where last seen, infant won't continue searching – infant has object permanence but egocentric
- 12 – 18 months
  - If object is not where last seen, infant will continue looking for it – infant understands objects exist even when they cannot be found

#### Conservation

- Understanding that appearance of an object may change while essence remains the same, e.g. 3 coins spaced out, is still the same amount as 3 coins close together

- Children may realise that both sets are the same amount only *after* counting the coins. Intuition is to rely on perception and not logic

### Theory of Mind

- Infants (up to 4 years old) do not understand that mental states of others can be different from their own – e.g. broccoli experiment, Sally and Anne experiment
- Influences on Theory of Mind
  - Brain maturation
  - Pretend play
  - Parental/family use of mental state language (explain and discuss)
  - Quality of parent/child relationship
  - Presence siblings

### Pre-cursor for Secure Attachment

- Sensitivity: The level of sensitivity a parent has towards their child (noticing, interpreting, responding)

### Gender and Moral Development

#### Gender

- People interact and perceive differently with others based on gender perceptions and stereotypes (e.g. jack in the box experiment)
- Few personality differences between infant boys and girls
- Primary-aged children will choose association with members of the same sex
- Adolescents experience pressure to conform to stereotype extremes to attract members of the opposite sex
- *Aggression*: Men engage in physical aggression much more than women. Women engage in social aggression much more than men. Aggression levels are the same amongst men and women, they just present this aggression differently
- *Mathematics*: Men perform only slightly better than women in mathematics tasks. This performance difference has reduced over time. Women's self-efficacy beliefs decline before performance does, implying self-belief plays a large role in this gender divide
- *Verbal Ability*: Women perform slightly better than men in social tasks.
- **Gender Theories**
  - **Psychoanalytic Theory**: Oedipus/Electra complex
  - **Biological Basis**: Biology plays important part in gender
  - **Cognitive Developmental Theory**: (Kohlberg)
    - *Gender Constancy*:
      - Gender refers to biology and does not depend on lifestyle
      - Gender Identity: Are you a boy or girl
      - Gender Stability: Will you be a mum or dad?
      - Gender Consistency: If you play with dolls, are you a boy or a girl?
  - **Gender Schema Theory**: (Martin & Halverson) We have schemas of what different genders engage in, and live out of these schemas
  - **Social Cognitive Theory**: (Bandura & Bussey) Socialisation affects personal factors/outcomes

#### Morality

- Parents instil perceptions of 'good' and 'bad'



- We first learn what is rewarded and punished – we then learn to strive for and avoid behaviours, even when consequences may not be present
- **Piaget's Theory**
  - Morality of **Constraint**: We firstly learn morality based on *consequences*
  - Morality of **Cooperation**: We secondly learn morality based on *intentions*
- **Kohlberg's Theory**
  - **Pre-Conventional**: Reward vs. punishment
  - **Conventional**: Social approval vs. disapproval
  - **Post-Conventional**: Internal values being fulfilled vs. being unfulfilled
- **Doing Good**
  - Prosocial Behaviour: Doing something to help someone
  - Altruism: Doing something to help someone at cost to oneself
  - Empathy predicts increased altruism, but does not guarantee it
  - Too much empathy can be counterproductive
- **Moral Disengagement**
  - Knowing right and wrong is often disengaged from *doing* right and wrong
  - Self-sanction (justifications) allow persons to act against their internalised perception of right and wrong, e.g. blaming others, minimising consequences, dehumanising
  - Enables bad behaviour without remorse