

Detailed Chapter Outline with Key Terms

Chapter 2: Theory and Research

Focus: Margaret Mead, Pioneer in Cross-Cultural Research

BASIC THEORETICAL ISSUES

- **Theory:** Coherent set of logically related concepts that seeks to organize, explain, and predict data.
- **Hypotheses:** Possible explanations for phenomena, used to predict the outcome of research.

Issue 1: Is Development Active or Passive?

- *Tabula rasa:* literally, a “blank slate,” philosopher John Locke’s view that society influences the development of the child.
- **Mechanistic model:** Model that views development as a passive, predictable response to stimuli.
- **Organismic model:** Model that views development as internally initiated by an active organism, and as occurring in a sequence of qualitatively different stages.

Issue 2: Is Development Continuous, or Does It Occur in Stages?

- *Quantitative change:* Changes in number or amount, such as the frequency with which a response is made.
- *Qualitative change:* Changes in kind or nature, implying that development occurs in a series of distinct stages or steps.

An Emerging Consensus

- *Bidirectional:* Referring to the fact that people change their world even as the world changes them.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Perspective 1: Psychoanalytic

- **Psychoanalytic perspective:** View of development as shaped by unconscious forces.
- *Psychoanalysis:* A therapeutic approach aimed at giving patients insight into unconscious emotional conflicts.

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Sigmund Freud: Psychosexual Development

- *Id*: Part of the personality that governs newborns, operating on the pleasure principle.
- *Pleasure principle*: The drive to seek immediate satisfaction of needs and desires.
- *Ego*: Part of the personality that represents reason, operating on the reality principle.
- *Reality principle*: Finding realistic ways to gratify the id.
- *Superego*: Part of the personality containing the conscience, incorporating socially approved behavior into the child's own value system.
- **Psychosexual development**: In Freudian theory, an unvarying sequence of stages of personality development during infancy, childhood, and adolescence, in which gratification shifts from the mouth to the anus and then to the genitals.
- *Fixation*: In psychoanalysis, an arrest in development that can show up in adult personality.
- *Oral stage*: Stage in psychosexual development in which feeding is the main source of sensual pleasure.
- *Anal stage*: Stage in psychosexual development in which the chief source of pleasure is moving the bowels.
- *Phallic stage*: Stage in psychosexual development in which boys develop sexual attachment to their mothers and girls to their fathers, with aggressive urges toward the same-sex parent.
- *Latency stage*: Stage in psychosexual development in which the child is sexually calm, and becomes socialized, develops skills, and learns about self and society.
- *Genital stage*: Stage in psychosexual development which lasts throughout adulthood, in which repressed sexual urges resurface to flow in socially approved channels.

Erik Erikson: Psychosocial Development

- **Psychosocial development**: The socially and culturally influenced process of development of the ego, or self. Eight stages.
- *Crisis*: major psychological theme that is particularly important at that time and will remain an issue to some degree throughout the rest of life.
- *Basic trust versus basic mistrust*: Critical theme of infancy, in which the virtue of hope is developed.

Perspective 2: Learning

- **Learning perspective**: View of development that holds that changes in behavior result from experience, or adaptation to the environment.
- *Learning*: A long-lasting change in behavior based on experience, or adaptation to the environment.

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Behaviorism

- **Behaviorism:** Learning theory that emphasizes the predictable role of environment in causing observable behavior.
- *Associative learning:* The formation of a mental link between two events.

Classical Conditioning

- **Classical conditioning:** Learning based on association of a stimulus that does not ordinarily elicit a response with another stimulus that does elicit the response.

Operant Conditioning

- **Operant conditioning:** Learning based on reinforcement or punishment.
- **Reinforcement:** In operant conditioning, a stimulus that encourages repetition of a desired behavior.
- **Punishment:** In operant conditioning, a stimulus that discourages repetition of a behavior.
- *Positive reinforcement:* Giving a reward, such as food, gold stars, or praise.
- *Negative reinforcement:* Taking away something the individual does not like (an aversive event), such as the removal of a loud, raspy noise.
- *Extinguished:* Term referring to the return of a behavior to its original, or baseline, level after removal of reinforcement.
- *Behavior modification:* Also called behavior therapy, it is the use of conditioning to gradually change behavior.

Social Learning (Social Cognitive) Theory

- **Social learning theory:** Theory that behaviors are learned by observing and imitating models. Also called social cognitive theory.
- **Observational learning (modeling):** Learning through watching the behavior of others.
- *Social cognitive theory:* Bandura's newest version of social learning theory, in which the emphasis on cognitive response to perceptions is increased.
- **Self-efficacy:** A confidence that a person has the characteristics needed to succeed.

Perspective 3: Cognitive

- **Cognitive perspective:** View that thought processes are central to development.

Jean Piaget's Cognitive-Stage Theory

- *Clinical method:* Technique combining observation with flexible questioning.
- **Organization:** The tendency to create increasingly complex cognitive structures (schemes).

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- **Schemes:** Organized patterns of behavior that a person uses to think about and act in a situation.
- **Adaptation:** How children handle new information in light of what they already know.
- **Assimilation:** Part of adaptation, taking in new information and incorporating into existing cognitive structures.
- **Accommodation:** Part of adaptation, changing one's cognitive structures to include new information.
- **Equilibration:** The constant striving for a stable balance in the shift from assimilation to accommodation.

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

- **Sociocultural Theory:** Focuses on the social and cultural processes that guide children's cognitive development.
- **Collaborative:** Vygotsky's view that children learn through social interaction.

The Information-Processing Approach

- **Information-processing approach:** Approach to the study of cognitive development by observing and analyzing the mental processes involved in perceiving and handling information.

Computer-Based Models

- **Computational models:** Flow charts that analyze the specific steps people go through in gathering, storing, retrieving, and using information.

Perspective 4: Evolutionary/Sociobiological

- **Survival of the fittest:** Darwinian process in which the animal most capable of survival (the one with the most adaptable traits) survives to pass on its genes in offspring.
- **Natural selection:** Darwinian process in which the weak and those with maladaptive traits are removed from the gene pool, leaving only the healthiest and strongest to survive and continue the species.
- **Ethology:** Study of distinctive adaptive behaviors of species of animals that have evolved to increase survival of the species.
- **Evolutionary psychology:** application of Darwinian principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest to individual behavior.

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Perspective 5: Contextual

- **Contextual perspective:** View of development that sees the individual as inseparable from the social context.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory

- **Bioecological theory:** Bronfenbrenner's approach to understanding processes and contexts of development.
- **Microsystem:** Bronfenbrenner's term for a setting in which a child interacts with others on an everyday, face-to-face basis.
- **Mesosystem:** Bronfenbrenner's term for linkages between two or more microsystems.
- **Exosystem:** Bronfenbrenner's term for linkages between two or more settings, one of which does not contain the child.
- **Macrosystem:** Bronfenbrenner's term for a society's overall cultural patterns.
- **Chronosystem:** Bronfenbrenner's term for effects of time on other developmental systems.

How Theory and Research Work Together

RESEARCH METHODS

- **Quantitative research:** Research that focuses on "hard" data and numerical or statistical measures.
- **Qualitative research:** Research that focuses on "soft" data, such as subjective experiences, feelings, or beliefs.
- **Scientific method:** System of established principles and processes of scientific inquiry. The usual steps in the method are:
 - *Identifying a problem* to be studied.
 - *Formulating hypotheses* to be tested by research.
 - *Collecting data.*
 - *Analyzing the data* to determine whether or not they support the hypothesis.
 - *Forming tentative conclusions.*
 - *Disseminating findings* so that other observers can check, learn from, analyze, repeat, and build on the results.

Sampling

- **Population:** A group to whom the findings in research may apply.
- **Sample:** Group of participants chosen to represent the entire population under study.
- **Generalized:** Application of results from a sample study to the population as a whole.

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- *Random selection:* Method of selecting participants in a study so that each person in a population has an equal and independent chance of being chosen.

Forms of Data Collection

Self-Reports: Diaries, Interviews, Questionnaires

- *Diary:* A log or record of activities.
- *Parental self-reports:* A log or record of activities kept by the parents of young children, concerning the children's activities.
- *Interview:* Method in which researchers, either face-to-face or on the telephone, ask questions about attitudes, opinions, or behavior.
- *Structured interview:* Interview in which each participant is asked the same set of questions.
- *Open-ended interview:* Interview in which the interviewer can vary the topics and order of questions and can ask follow-up questions based on the responses.
- *Questionnaire:* Printed questions which participants fill out and return.

Naturalistic and Laboratory Observation

- **Naturalistic observation:** Research method in which behavior is studied in natural settings without intervention or manipulation.
- **Laboratory observation:** Research method in which all participants are observed under the same controlled conditions.
- *Observer bias:* The researcher's tendency to interpret data to fit expectations, or to emphasize some aspects and minimize others.

Behavioral and Performance Measures

- *Valid:* A test that measures the abilities it claims to measure is said to be valid.
- *Reliable:* A test that provides consistent results from one testing to another is reliable.
- *Standardized:* A test that is given and scored by the same methods and criteria for all test-takers is said to be standardized.
- **Operational definitions:** Definitions stated solely in terms of the operations or procedures used to produce or measure a phenomenon.
- **Cognitive neuroscience:** Study of cognitive development that links brain processes with cognitive ones.
- *Developmental cognitive neuroscience:* Focuses on how cognitive growth occurs as the brain interacts with the environment.
- *Social cognitive neuroscience:* An emerging interdisciplinary field that bridges brain, mind, and behavior, bringing together data from cognitive neuroscience, social psychology, and the information-processing approach.

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Basic Research Designs

Case Studies

- **Case study:** Study of an individual. *Ethnographic Studies*
- **Ethnographic study:** In-depth study of a culture, which uses a combination of methods including participant observation.
- **Participant observation:** Research method in which the observer lives with the people or participates in the activity being observed.

Correlational Studies

- **Correlational study:** Research design intended to discover whether a statistical relationship between variables exists.
- *Correlation:* A statistical relationship between two or more variables.
- *Variables:* Phenomena that change or vary among people or can be varied for purposes of research.
- *Positive correlation:* Variables that are related increase or decrease together.
- *Negative correlation:* Variables have an inverse relationship; as one increases, the other decreases.

Experiments

- **Experiment:** Rigorously controlled, replicable procedure in which the researcher manipulates variables to assess the effect of one on the other.
- *Replicate:* Repeating an experiment in exactly the same way with different participants to verify the results and conclusions.

Groups and Variables

- **Experimental group:** In an experiment, the group receiving the treatment under study.
- *Treatment:* The phenomenon the researcher wants to study.
- **Control group:** In an experiment, a group of people, similar to those in the experimental group, who do not receive the treatment whose effects are to be measured.
- *Treatment groups:* In an experiment, groups that each receive one of the treatments under study.
- *Dialogic reading:* A method of reading picture books to very young children.
- **Independent variable:** In an experiment, the condition over which the experimenter has direct control.
- **Dependent variable:** In an experiment, the condition that may or may not change as a result of changes in the independent variable.

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Random Assignment

- *Random assignment*: Assigning the participants in an experiment to groups in such a way that each person has an equal chance of being placed in any group.
- *Confound*: Contamination of an experiment by unintended differences between the groups.

Laboratory, Field, and Natural Experiments

- *Laboratory experiments*: Experiment in which the participants are brought to a special place where they experience conditions manipulated by the experimenter.
- *Field experiment*: A controlled study conducted in an everyday setting, such as home or school.
- *Natural experiment*: Study comparing people who have been accidentally “assigned” to separate groups by circumstances of life (a correlational study).

Developmental Research Designs

Longitudinal, Cross-Sectional, and Sequential Designs

- **Longitudinal study**: Study designed to assess changes in a sample over time.
- **Cross-sectional study**: Study design in which people of different ages are assessed on one occasion.
- **Sequential study**: Study design that combines cross-sectional and longitudinal techniques.

Ethics of Research

- *Informed consent*
- *Avoidance of deception*
- *Harm and loss of dignity*
- *Privacy and confidentiality*
- *Right to decline or withdraw*
- *Correct any undesirable effects*

Three ethical principles that guide researchers in resolving ethical dilemmas:

- *Beneficence*
- *Justice*
- *Respect*

Right to Informed Consent

Avoidance of Deception

Right to Privacy and Confidentiality