

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IDENTIFICATION AND CHILD REARING TECHNIQUES

Introduction

As the topic suggests, we will be looking into the personality development of a child.

We all know that each person in the world has a unique personality. A personality that shows what a person he/she is.

We also know that a baby when born has no personality of his own. Except the ones he/she have got as genes from the parents.

We also know that it is only gradually that the child starts showing the true colours of his identity. It is a known fact that at the time of birth, child is innocent and pure.

It is the outside and inside factors that help the child to develop his personality.

So, today we will learn how a child develops the personality. We will see how the process of identification and child rearing techniques mould a child's personality.

We will first start by knowing what is meant by personality development. Then we will see briefly what the psychologists feel about the reasons for this development.



Along with that we will see the different ways of identification process and finally about the different parental styles used by parents to develop the Childs' personality.

Personality Development:

Personality development is the development of a person's attitudes and behaviour in an organised manner.

The way a person's personality has been developed, makes the person unique. Everyone has a unique personality. It differs among people.

Personality is what makes somebody a unique person, and it is recognizable soon after birth. A child's personality has several components: temperament, environment, and character.

Temperament is genetically determined traits. The social environment in which a child is born also helps along with the temperament to develop personality.

The environment factors are called "nurturing". The way a child is reared or nurtured in a society and a house, determines the way his personality will be formed.

Finally, the third component of personality is character. Character is the set of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural patterns learned from experience.

This determines how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. A person's character continues to evolve throughout life, although much depends on inborn traits and early experiences. Character is also dependent on a person's moral development.

A child inherits many personality traits from its parents. Personality of a person takes its basic formation in the beginning period of childhood.

Its experiences in the family and the society are very crucial. Friends, teachers and the environment of school have their own positive or negative impact.

The whole process of development occurs in series of stages when each stage builds on the proceeding one.

This is a continuous process where the whole process of development is affected if one stage does not occur.

There are internal and external factors, which determine the development.

The internal factors are mainly the genes, which the child inherits from the parents, while the external factors are environmental like health, socio-economic surroundings, family and the stimulation given.

All these factors interact together and each depend on or influence the other.

Theories on Personality Development

Each one of them is different. But they have the same concept that any development in a person is through the different stages of life.

Sigmund Freud:

According to him, the mind is structured into two main parts: the conscious and unconscious mind. The conscious mind includes all the things that we are aware of.

The unconscious mind, on the other hand, includes all of the things beyond our awareness – all of the wishes, desires, hopes, urges and memories that lie beyond awareness yet continue to influence behaviour.

In addition to these two main components of the mind, his theory also divides human personality into three major components: the id, ego and superego.

The id is the most primitive part of personality that is the source of all our most basic urges.

The ego is that part of the personality that is charged with dealing with reality.

The superego is the part of the personality that holds all of the internalized morals and standards that we acquire from our parents, family and society at large.



So, according to Sigmund Freud, the personality development of a person is influenced by the 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Superego'.

According to him these three components are very important. It is also influenced by how these three components inter-act with each other. If they work harmoniously, then a person will not have any disorder.

But the moment these start working against each other, a person can Have a personality disorder.

Erick Erickson:

Erikson believed that childhood is very important in personality development. He accepted many of Freud's theories, including the id, ego, and superego, and the theory of infantile sexuality.

But Erikson rejected Freud' attempt to describe personality solely on the basis of sexuality. Unlike Freud, felt that personality continued to develop beyond five years of age.

He chose to focus on how social relationships impact personality development. The theory also extends beyond childhood to look at development across the entire lifespan.

Lawrence Kohlberg:

He developed a theory of personality development that focused on the growth of moral thought.

Kohlberg determined that the process of moral development was principally concerned with justice.

Personality Development through Identification by Sigmund Freud:

Identification is nothing but development of a child's self-concept. This involves the child's incorporation of the characteristics of parents or other persons by adopting their appearance, attitudes, and behaviour.

Children tend to identify with those persons to whom they are emotionally attached and whom they perceive to be similar to themselves in some way.

Primary Identification:

This is a primitive and original form of emotional attachment to something or someone. Example, the baby has an emotional attachment with his parents and experiences his parents as a part of himself.

During this process of identification children unconsciously adopt the characteristics of their parents and begin to associate themselves with and copy the behaviour of their parents.

Due the fact that the child adopts the characteristics of their parents', it helps them to learn to live in the world and culture to which they are born.

Partial or Secondary Identification:

This is based on the perception of a special quality of another person. This quality or ideal is often represented in a 'leader figure' or a group. He can identify himself with a group because he has something common with that group.

This plays an important role in the formation of groups. It contributes to the development of character and the ego is formed by identification with a group. It promotes the social life of persons who will be able to identify with one another.

Other Identifications that Help in the Development of Personality

Gender Identification:

An important part of identity in psychology is the gender identity. That is the child identifies if he/she is a boy or a girl.

Between one and two years of age, children become conscious of physical differences between boys and girls. Before their third birthday they are easily able to label themselves as either a boy or a girl as they acquire a strong concept of self.



By age four, children's gender identity is stable, and they know they will always be a boy or a girl.

At the same time, children learn gender role behaviour—that is, doing things “that boys do” or “that girls do.” Before the age of three they can differentiate sex-stereotyped toys (trucks, dolls) that are identified with boys or girls.

By three years of age they have also become more aware of boy and girl activities, interests, and occupations.

According to the social identification theory, social identity is the person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group.

In humans, the child makes friends or becomes a member of a social group, when he feels that all the members in that group are similar to him. They divide their friends as 'in group' and 'out group'. What is this?

In-group are people who are very similar to the self of a child and out group are the ones who are different from the self of the child. In simple words, it is basically 'us' and 'them' group. We usually use these terms on a daily basis.

Social identity theory states that the in-group will discriminate against the out-group to enhance their self-image.

According to social identity theory, individuals form self-conceptions that are based on two parts:

- 1) Personal or self-identity
- 2) Collective identity

Personal or self-identity refers to our unique, personal qualities such as our beliefs, our abilities and skills, etc.

The collective self includes all the qualities that arise from being part of a society, culture, family, groups, clubs, etc.

We saw the different forms of identities that help in the identification process.

This identification process also helps in the personality development through a process called individuation or identity formation.

Identity Formation or Individuation:

It is the development of the distinct personality of an individual. This gives a child a sense of uniqueness from others. It also gives them a sense of affiliation or belongingness.

The formation of one's identity occurs through one's identification significantly with parents. It is also influenced by other individuals and also with 'groups' as they are perceived.

According to Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development, the development covers the entire lifespan, including adulthood.

He used the term "crisis" to describe a series of internal conflicts that are linked to developmental stages.

According to his theory, the way a person resolves the crisis will determine their personal identity and future development.

Emotional Identification:

By age between 4 and 5 years, children believe, unconsciously, that some of the attributes of their parents are part of their own self.

Example, a girl whose mother is afraid of storms and thunder is tempted to assume that she too is afraid of these things.

Till now we saw how a personality can be developed through a process of identification. Now, we will see how it is developed by the ways a child is nurtured or reared or brought up.

Personality Development through Child Rearing Techniques

Personality development refers to a process where a child's personality is groomed and enhanced.

The grooming of the child's personality is done in such a way to bring some positive changes in his life to make him a better person.

All over the world, it is believed that rearing or parenting plays a critical role in the development of a child's personality.

This is because the parents are considered the child's first connection with society. What the child learns in the family will reflect the way he behaves in the society.

It is considered that parents are a better judge to a Childs' behaviour. Hence, parents can understand how their child will respond to certain situations. This makes it easy for them to anticipate issues that might become problematic for their child.



Every society has different child rearing practices which they use to help in the child development.

The practices depend on cultures, beliefs, and socio-economic as well as environmental factors. These different factors influence child development as societies have different perceptions and expectations on child development.

It is believed that genes which a child inherits from the parents also play a very big role in determining the functions of the body and mind.

A child can have some disabilities or deformity, fast or delayed development, simply from genetic reasons. Malnutrition or poor nutritional status, various diseases can also cause a developmental delay or impairment.

In poorly educated and traditional populations, parents are unaware that their child rearing practices can affect their children's cognitive and language development. They fail to appreciate the importance of playing and chatting with young children.

Many parents do not allow the child to explore things independently and also use high discipline. Emphasis is generally placed on obedience, respect for elders and religious observance.

Different Parenting Styles that can Affect the Personality Development:

It is believed all over the world that family responsibilities and priorities can determine the wellbeing of the child. It is also believed that the way parents bring up their child also helps in the development of personality.

The child development is a continuous process. The first three years are critical periods for learning as the child acquires new knowledge and absorbs everything around him. During this time, he starts to develop his personality.

Different styles used by parents to bring up their child and to teach them what is right and wrong.

We know our parents have used different methods to teach us what is right and wrong. The parents feel the stress of turning their child into a responsible person.

All parents want the best for their children. So they feel that the method they are taking is right without really understanding how it will affect the child's personality.

Hence, many parents create their own style from a combination of factors. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one's own parents and culture.

Most parents learn parenting practices from their own parents.

Authoritative Parenting:

Authoritative parent is demanding and responsive. Authoritative parenting is also 'balanced' parenting or 'Ideal parenting'.

It is characterized by a child-centred approach.

They can understand how their children are feeling and teach them how to regulate their feelings. They often help their children to find appropriate outlets to solve problems.

Authoritative parents encourage children to be independent but still place control and limits on their actions.

Parents try to be warm towards the child. Authoritative parents are not usually as controlling as authoritarian parents.

They allow the child to explore more freely.

They allow the child to make their own decisions based upon their own reasoning. Often, authoritative parents produce children who are more independent and self-reliant.

Authoritative parents also set clear standards for their children, monitor the limits and also allow children to develop autonomy.



Punishments for misbehaviour are measured and consistent. It is not arbitrary or violent.

Authoritative parents set limits and demand maturity, but when punishing a child, the parent will explain his or her motive for their punishment.

They are attentive to their children's need and concerns, and will typically forgive and teach instead of punishing if a child falls short.

Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parenting is also called strict parenting. It is characterized by high expectations of conformity and compliance to parental rules and directions.

They only allow little open dialogue between parent and child.

Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive, inflexible parenting style in which parents make their children follow their directions.

These parents expect much from their child, but generally do not explain the reason for the rules. They are less responsive to their child's needs, and are more likely to ground their child rather than discuss the problem.

It is seen that some children of authoritarian parents develop insecurities and display anti-social behaviour.

Indulgent Parenting Style:

Indulgent parenting is also called “lenient style”. It is characterized as having few behavioural expectations for the child.

It is a style of parenting in which parents are very much involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them.

Parents are nurturing and accepting, and are very responsive to the child’s needs and wishes.

Indulgent parents do not require children to regulate themselves or behaves appropriately.

This may result in creating “spoiled children” or “spoiled sweet” children depending on the behaviour of the children. These children are used to getting everything in life. They have no value for things or people.

Neglectful Parenting:

Neglectful parenting is also called uninvolved, and detached. The parents are low in warmth and control. They are generally not involved in their child’s life.

These parents are disengaged, undemanding, and do not set limits. Children whose parents are neglectful develop these use that other aspects of the parents’ lives are more important than they are.

The children feel that they are unimportant in their parents’ life.

Many children of this parenting style often attempt to provide for themselves or stop depending on the parent. Some children become independent and mature beyond their years.

Children become emotionally withdrawn from social situations. This disturbed attachment also impacts relationships later on in life.

In adolescence, they may show patterns of delinquency and depression.

We will see some other types of parenting also.

Over Parenting:

These parents try to involve themselves in every aspect of their child’s life. They often attempt to solve all their problems and stifling the child’s ability to act independently or solve his own problems.



They always consider their child small and feel that the child is not mature enough to handle things or make decisions independently. This frustrates the child a lot and they can get aggressive or they can be too timid.

Toxic Parenting:

Poor parenting, with bad relationship between the parent and child will result in toxic parenting. It results in complete disruption of the child's ability to identify one's self and reduced self-esteem.

The parents neglect the needs of the child and abuse is sometimes seen in this parenting style.

Gender Stereotyping done by Society and Parents:

Personality development can happen through gender bias. Parents and society drills into the minds of the kids about the differences between the sexes.

According to them boys are expected to be more aggressive, while girls frequently learn to take on stereotypically feminine qualities.

They tend to imitate and internalize what they see and then repeat those patterns in their own lives as they grow up.

Children raised watching their parents adhering to strict gender-stereotyped roles are, in general, more likely to take on those roles themselves as adults.

Conclusion

We saw a different aspect in the development of the preschool child.

Personality Development is an important aspect in everybody's life. We learnt the meaning of personality development.

We also came across the way the psychologists have viewed this development.

We saw that, Freud believed that it was the 'id', 'ego' and 'superego' that was responsible for this personality development.

But Erikson was of the opinion that the personality developed through the various 'crisis' that the child or adult has to face.

We also learned about the way an identity is formed through the social, gender, emotional identification, primary and partial identification.

We also saw the impact of the ways in parenting that can also affect the development of the personality.

We saw how an authoritative parent is child-centred. While the neglect parenting makes the child depressed as he feels he is an unwanted child in the family.



The toxic parenting leads to violent behaviours and the child is abused.

While indulgent parenting makes the child a 'spoilt brat'. The over parenting makes the child feel very suffocating as he cannot make any independent decisions.

Authoritarian parenting is called strict parenting. In this the child is forced to abide all the things that the parents ask him to do.

Developing a child's personality is an essential element in today's competitive world. A developed personality is definitely a key to success.

Though developing personality in children is a slow and steady process yet with proper patience parents can definitely get it through.

The child psychologists always ask the parents to consider their child to be unique and important.

They also say that most of the disorders that a child faces are due to the wrong method of parenting.

They feel that the child should be given a little freedom to make decisions of their own with the understanding that if it is wrong then to accept the fault.