
In this assignment, I will be presenting a case study in order to explain the principal psychological perspectives as applied to the understanding of the development of individuals.

Development Psychology is the study of age related changes throughout the human life span. It identifies the biological, psychological and social characteristics that influence the growing process of an individual. This whole process of studies begins with **Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)** and **Jean Piaget (1896-1980)**, their focus of development was on the maturation of children. However, researchers who study human development expanded their interest to include the study of the physical, motor, cognitive, intellectual, emotional, personality, social and moral changes that occur throughout all stages of the life span.

Case Study

Candice is 6 years and lives in central London. Drug substances and violence surrounded her daily life. She lives with her single mother who involved herself in an abusive relationship with her boyfriend. Candice found herself beat with coat hangers and a belt. Her mother was not home that often and she was forced to sit outside, so that she could sell some drugs. Her mother was uneducated and supported the family with benefits. Candice has never met her father because he was convicted of robbery and misusing drugs. She hated her father and wished for him to gain serious punishment. She often acts it out when she plays alone. She has a history of terrorising animals. Her attendance and independent learning was very poor in school, being diagnosed with attention deficit disorder. Candice threatens to kill one of her friend's baby brothers. Few weeks later, she broke into her friend's house, aiming to kill the baby.

Relating this to **Erikson theory**, it stated that human have to move through stages of development to have Erikson theory, it stated that human have to move through stages of development to have their needs met. An individual needs to be mentally ready to move on to the next stage. This depends on the social environment they are in. Candice, being six years old is in the **initiative versus guilt** stage of Erikson's stage theories. Within, this stage she is supposed to be ready to take initiative in her own activities. At this stage she is lacking the imagination to cooperate with others. If the mother does not allow her to take initiative then she will feel guilty for her attempts at independence. She may also be in the **industry versus inferiority** stage. This means she should be aware of her responsibilities such home work and chores. She should be able create a sense of industry, if praised and rewarded by her mother. If this stage is not meet then she will feel sense of defeat and inferior. She would be influenced by her friends and teachers. However this is mainly how it should be but is not Candice because she is lacking this stage. Without a parental figure, Candice was forced to take on too much initiative and make too many decisions on her own. She feels no guilt in being independent but according to Erikson. She feels inferior due to the lack of praise and reward from her mother.

According to Jean Piaget and his stages of **cognitive development**, children construct their knowledge of the world through reorganisation and they move to higher level of psychological thinking. He looked at how children think of themselves and their environment, when moving through each stage. In these stages, children select what they see and they interpret. In the **preoperational stage**, from age 2-7, children should have a mastery of language and use words to represent objects. During this stage, children cannot use developmental capacities systematically. They are more egocentric, have the tendency to understand the world through your own position. They qualify their own thoughts to inanimate objects, known as animism. **For example, a child may say that the sky is sad because the sun is not shining.** They have no sense of concentration, a tendency to concentrate on one aspect of problem, like having tunnel vision. It is called **conservation studies**, which are a series of tests for children to test their concepts of length, quantity, area and volume. **For example, if you were to place two glasses in front of a child, one tall and thin, the other short and stout, filled with the same amount of liquid in each, he or she will the tall one contains more liquid because the glass looks full.** In the story Candice is in the preoperational stage of Piaget's cognitive development stages. Candice is not moving to a higher level of psychological functioning. She seems to have trouble socialising. She has no friends at school and she is constantly getting into fights with her peers. She is unstable, both emotionally and psychologically.

George Herbert Mead's theory suggests that in order to take on the role of another you need to know the rules to play. At this stage children know general morals, values and rules of his or her particular culture. Candice seems to have been left in the **play stage** due to her age. She does not seem to have any rules to abide by. If Candice was in the game stage, she would be playing games like hide and seek, instead of torturing animals. Another part of Mead's theory was that in the play, children imitate others behaviour. Candice was abused and so I feel that this is why the violent behaviour in school and towards animals came from. Cultural learning is most intense during infancy and early childhood. Candice was probably neglected of many experiences that would teach him this knowledge. If socialization is absent during early stages, we can never regain it and this presents a lack of social experience. This has an effect on relations the child will have later in her childhood. This is obvious in Candice's case, through her behaviour in school. Once again we see that her constant fighting and lack of friends is due to his lack of socialization skills.

Candice was put in a special education class when she was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder. She often fantasized about extracting punishment towards her father's death through violent means. She also killed her own pet, and terrorized other animals. She grew up living in poverty in a single-parent home. She was surrounded by drugs and abuse and grew up without a father figure. She was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, although not directly related to violence, may have recognized to frustration, which in turn could lead to anger and aggressive behaviour. Candice is now taken into care. If she were to be returned to the same environment that she was taken from, I feel that she would go back to her old ways. She is still young and very impressionable. Her surrounding is still responsible for much of her behaviour. Even if she was much better in care, I think she would get back her old

habits, and become violent. I strongly feel that she should not be returned to her home. I think that she would have a good chance of becoming a more social person and have the possibility of leading a normal healthy life in living.