

Inquiry Based Project

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**Human Growth and
Development**

MY QUESTION:

- I want to know: **How does malnutrition/poverty affect child development?**

In this presentation I will be examining :

- How malnutrition affects development, specifically comparing it to the behavioral, contextual, and psychodynamic perspectives
- If the theorists theories match up with research on malnourished children
- If personal experience seeing malnutrition in friends/students and if that matches with any theories

Psychodynamic Perspective:

- The study of development that claims that behavior is affected by internal forces, memories, and conflicts that a person has either no recollection or control over, generally accompanied by unconscious responses to events, actions, or things
- Many of these unconscious responses stem from childhood events and they continually influence behavior throughout their lifespan
- There are 2 different theories, but i'll be focusing on Erikson

Theorists and what they believed:

Erikson : believed human development occurs throughout our lives in eight specific stages that are generally the same for everyone

- Believed in each stage of development there is a crisis or conflict that must be resolved
- Malnourishment or poverty is the conflict in this case
 - This could be considered “unconscious” because many children don’t even know they aren’t getting enough to eat
 - Subconsciously this could affect their feelings of trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame, initiative vs, guilt, industry vs. inferiority, and identity vs. role diffusion (some of Erikson’s stages)

Research Shows:

- Like the book says, this theory is hard to test
- It's a very vague theory to test and it's hard to prove because of that
- What I can compare this best to is P.T.S.D., which can be either subconscious or conscious responses
 - Children who have been severely malnourished suffer from P.T.S.D.
 - Malnourishment is linked to poverty, which can also be linked to violence, such as in war stricken countries
 - “Children, while too young to fully understand what they have witnessed, may also develop physical PTSD symptoms, including refusing to eat. Even small babies can present signs of trauma.” (Duvergé)
- This represents the idea of subconsciously reacting to their malnourishment and violent childhood by not eating, without even realizing it

Behavioral Perspective:

- Whereas the psychodynamic perspective is an unconscious reaction, behavioral perspective has to do with conscious reactions to stimuli
- It suggests the keys to comprehending development is by observing behavior and other outside factors in a child's life
- These theorists don't believe that people go through distinct developmental stages, but instead people will react to whatever stimuli they are exposed to

Theorists and what they believed:

- John B. Watson believed that we could comprehend development by studying the events, things, and stimuli that make up someone's environment
- Believed strongly in operant (a form of learning where voluntary responses to events are either strengthened or weakened when it's associated to good or bad consequences) vs. classical (when someone/something alters their behavior or respond in a particular way to a neutral stimulus that usually doesn't revoke that kind of response) conditioning
- essentially , behavior that is praised or has positive repercussions is likely to repeated while one that is punished is not

Research Shows:

- When comparing malnourishment and the behavioral perspective, what comes to mind is the connection between poverty and malnourishment
- I read an article about following children for 3 decades to see if they remained poor as an adult because of their environment
 - (this may be a stretch BUT) One could claim that a form of operant conditioning is shown in the connection between school and success
 - The mother knew that if their kids went to a good school and worked hard, they could go to college and break the cycle of poverty in their family (Summers).

Contextual Perspective:

- This perspective identifies the connection between a child's development and the relationship to their environment and different factors in their life
 - Specifically their physical, cognitive, personality, and social worlds
 - This one is the most relevant to being malnourished or poor because that is the child's environment
 - This perspective states that a child's "unique development" cannot be fully seen or analyzed without also looking at their specific complex social and cultural context

Theorists and what they believed:

- The Bioecological Approach (Bronfenbrenner) : suggests that there are 5 different levels in one's environment that affect their development
 - They are: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem
 - I can best connect microsystem and macrosystem with poverty stricken children
 - Microsystem consists of: the people or things that surround you everyday, they are the immediate surroundings for a child (homes, parents, caregivers)
 - Macrosystem consists of: the way culture influences a child's development, such as living in a poor environment

Research Shows:

- Directly related to the microsystem, research shows that a mother's level of income, her education, and mental state have lasting impressions on a child's development
 - "Children whose mothers showed more symptoms of depression when they were four years old were more likely to show overt non-compliance 18 months later at 5 ½ years of age." (Winer and Thompson)

Research Shows II:

- Directly related to the macrosystem, research shows that a child whose family has a greater demographic risk is less likely to understand and comprehend emotions in others and individually (this demographic and the child's socioeconomic status represents the culture that child is raised in and how that affects their development)
 - Though it's not a direct connection, statistically with a lower socioeconomic status, the treatment of children is worse, therefore affecting their performance in school
 - Because of their socioeconomic status, the culture the child was raised in, their cognitive ability was affected (Winer and Thompson)

References:

Abby, Winer C., and Ross A. Thompson. "How Poverty and Depression Impact a Child's Social and Emotional Competence." *Center for Poverty Research University of California, Davis*. UC Davis, n.d. Web. 05 Apr. 2017.

Duvergé, Stephanie. "Malnutrition in Conflict: Treating the Psychological Causes of Hunger." *Action Against Hunger*. Action Against Hunger, Aug. 2014. Web. 05 Apr. 2017.

Summers, Juana. "Rich Kid, Poor Kid: For 30 Years, Baltimore Study Tracked Who Gets Ahead." *NPR*. NPR, 07 Aug. 2014. Web. 05 Apr. 2017.