

Chapter 1: Developmental Psychology Applied to Aging

Aging Population:

In 1986, the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics was established with the goal of bringing data on aging together in documents that could be shared with anyone interested, including educators, researchers, and policymakers

5 key areas in the study of adulthood and aging:

Population, including racial and ethnic composition and living arrangements

Economics, including income, poverty, and participation in the workforce

Health Status, including cognitive function and disability

Health risks and behaviors, including physical activity, obesity and smoking

Health care, including services, expenditures and facilities

Challenging Issues:

1. Changes in age distribution will affect many industries. Health care, insurance, housing trans
2. Lack of research-some topics are emphasized while others are neglected
 - Less emphasis on young and middle age
3. Highlighting commonalities and diversities between younger and older populations

A Psychological Approach to Adult Development and Aging

Psychology: scientific study of mental and behavioral processes

Developmental psychology: study of ways individuals change as they age

Adult developmental and aging: study of normal or typical ways mental and behavioral processes change with age beyond adolescence

Multidisciplinary and Multifaceted Endeavor

Psychology: individual characteristics that influence behavior

Sociology: societal factors that influence behavior

Anthropology: cultural heritage and background that influence behavior

EX: by Melanie domenech Rodriguez found four parenting styles levels of responsiveness and demandingness

1. Parents high in both were labeled authoritative while those low in both were labeled permissive

The Developmental Psychological Perspective:

Established national institute of aging in 1974

Gerontological society of America founded in 1946

Current research emphasizes 4 areas of study of adult development and aging:

1. Stasis: studying stable aspects
2. Change: that occurs with age
3. Decline: functional decline
4. Growth based: positive areas such as wisdom, expertise and spirituality

Positive and Realistic Approach:

Positive Psychology: approach emphasizes individual strengths, resilient qualities

-fosters productive coping, personal growth, life satisfaction, well being

Optimal aging: adjusting and coping well with life changes

-emphasizes physical and psychological adjustment

Multiple Dimensions of Age:

Young adulthood: 18 or 20 to 40-45 years

Middle: 40-45 years to 60-65

Late adulthood: 60-65 to end of life

Later adulthood further segmented:

1. Young-old 60-65 to 74
2. Old-old 75 to 84

Oldest-old 85+

European scholars divide older ages differently:

1. Adulthood-pre-retirement: second age
2. Pre-retirement-oldest old: third age
3. End of life: fourth age

Functional Age:

Chronological Age: age in weeks or months- more useful when considering child development

Normative age graded influences: typical events/influences strongly related to age

Functional Age: a useful concept of age in adulthood, comprises of physical and cognitive abilities

Biological Age: an individual's health when compared to others of the same chronological age (physical well being)

Biomarkers: bodily functions

Psychological Age: individual's ability to cope and adjust to changes in environment when compared to others of same chronological age

Social age: comparing social roles and expectations with those of the same chronological age

Age Related Influences:

Normative history graded influences: experiences of a culture/society at a point in history that may eventually define a generation. EX: great depression, war, disasters, technological advances

- Cohort: a group of people who have grown up together and have similar normative history graded experiences

Non-normative Influences: unexpected personal experiences, or chance occurrences that alter our lives such as winning/losing a large sum of money or surviving a car accident.

Metatheories as Philosophies of Development

- Useful in organizing knowledge and designing research

Mechanistic Metatheory: Employs a machine metaphor.

Emphasis is on the ways the environment acts on an individual and that individual's behavioral response

Source of change is external

Change occurs in continuous (increases, long standing plateaus, or decreases), smooth not jagged/step like

Items studies are observable and measurable, involve quantitative design

CRITICISM: view is incomplete, does not consider whole person or whole context

Organismic: emphasizes the biological and genetic influences on development, revealed through maturation and environmental influences, development consists of spurts of growth/decline, discontinuous and qualitative change. Each stage is more complex than previous stage. Additions and reworking on previous stage

CRITICISM:

Stages not always linear, and in numerical order, behavior outside of normal does not imply behavior is abnormal

Contextual: Dominant philosophy in developmental psychology, recognizes interaction of internal and external forces, development is continuous and discontinuous

Acknowledges influences of: individual differences, diversity, and levels of culture

Baltes Found 7 core assumptions influencing current lifespan developmental theory:

1. Developmental is a lifelong process
2. There are gains and losses in each period
3. Developmental is multidirectional
4. Contextualism is evident
5. Historical influences are relevant
6. Plasticity: skills and abilities are malleable