

Critical Analysis: Freud & Erikson's Theories of Development

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Growth is a process that occurs in an individual till he passes. As a result, it is critical to understand how the development process works, how it impacts persons, and what modifications and demands are necessary. With that said, I'd like further elaborate on two fascinating developmental theories, Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory and Erik Erickson's psychosocial theory, highlighting their contrasts and parallels. Erikson's psychosocial stage theory, in contrast to Freud's psychosexual perspective, takes a broader view of development, embracing childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Erikson considered that development was an ongoing process that persisted throughout a person's entire lifespan, contrary to Freud's view that it was mostly finished pretty early on.

Comparison

(Berk, 2016), mentioned that Freud only developed his theory up to a particular age since he considered that a person grew fully in his early period. Although he believed that a person's tendencies to grow as they age also, Erikson extended his hypothesis until old age and developed the psychosocial theory on the basis of identity and cultural expectations. Erikson developed the Psychosocial Theory, which placed a heavy emphasis on social and environmental aspects. Erikson gave a comprehensive explanation of life, including maturity, and held that everyone continues to grow as they mature. Erikson's idea was founded on the needs of every individual's identity and culture. Contrarily, Freud developed the Psychosexual Theory, which places a strong emphasis on biological and primal wants. Freud only addressed a portion of life, which ended in adolescence. Freud disagreed and said that development only happens in the first few years of life. According to Freud, the key tenet of his theory was the significance of maturation. Additionally, the terms used to describe the various phases varied

between the two theories. For example, the initial phase in Freud's theory was referred to as the oral stage, whilst the initial phase in Erikson's theory was referred to as trust vs. mistrust.

We'll examine some of the most significant parallels and contrasts between Freud and Erikson at different stages of development in order to compare and evaluate these two ideas.

Birth to 11 Years

Both development theories emphasise the significance of childhood events, however, there are significant distinctions between Freud's and Erikson's beliefs. Although Erikson was particularly interested in how attentive carers are to an infant's needs, Freud focused on the significance of feeding. Although there are some discrepancies between Erikson's and Freud's theories, they both centre on how kids gain a sense of autonomy and mastery. Freud's hypothesis focused far more on the libido's function during the preschool and early elementary years. The emphasis of Erikson's thesis was primarily on how kids interact with their parents and other kids. According to Freud, this age is more of a liminal stage between childhood and adolescence. Erikson, on the other hand, thought that at this stage, children continue to develop a sense of individuality and responsibility (Cherry, 2023).

Adolescence and Adulthood

Both Freud's and Erikson's theories of development placed a high priority on adolescence. Teenagers start to create their own sense of self according to both beliefs. Freud's thesis was limited to development between birth and the adolescent years, but Erikson's idea stretched into maturity. The ideas of development put out by Freud and Erikson have several significant parallels. Both emphasised the value of social interaction and acknowledged the influence childhood has on one's personality as they relate to adulthood. Erikson's theory

proposed that individuals must acquire the ability to love, care for others, and establish an understanding of morality, whereas Freud's proposed that the individual forms sexual consciousness and identity (Cherry, 2023). The table below helps to visualise the comparison of these two theories.

Particulars	Erikson	Freud
Theories	Psychosocial theory	Psychosexual theory
Main focus	Social and environmental components	Basic Needs and Biological Factors.
Includes	Adulthood	Early adolescence is where it stops.
Beliefs	He argues that growth never stops and extends all the way into old age.	He argues that the first few years are the sole period when development occurs.
Theory Based on	Cultural and identity considerations.	Sex (importance of maturation)

Table 1. Comparison of Freud’s and Erikson’s theory (Smith, 2023)

Conclusion

Although Freud and Erickson's ideas vary greatly, they also have many similarities. The impact of the unconscious mind on the emergence of identity is acknowledged by both Freud and Erikson. Both viewpoints base development on some type of conflict. If a dispute is not properly settled, it causes emotional turmoil, which can contribute to mental illness. Both approaches contend that early stress can skew the development of personality, which is essential for personality growth. However, the essence of a dispute varies between Freud and Erikson. The tension in Freud's work revolves around intimacy. The psychological perspective of Erikson's theory assumes individuals are moulded by their environment and yearn to belong to some sort of community. According to Erikson's theory, conflict is settled once an individual

cultivates respect and concern for others. According to Freud's theory, conflict is settled when a person experiences sufficient satisfaction in their formative years.

References

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