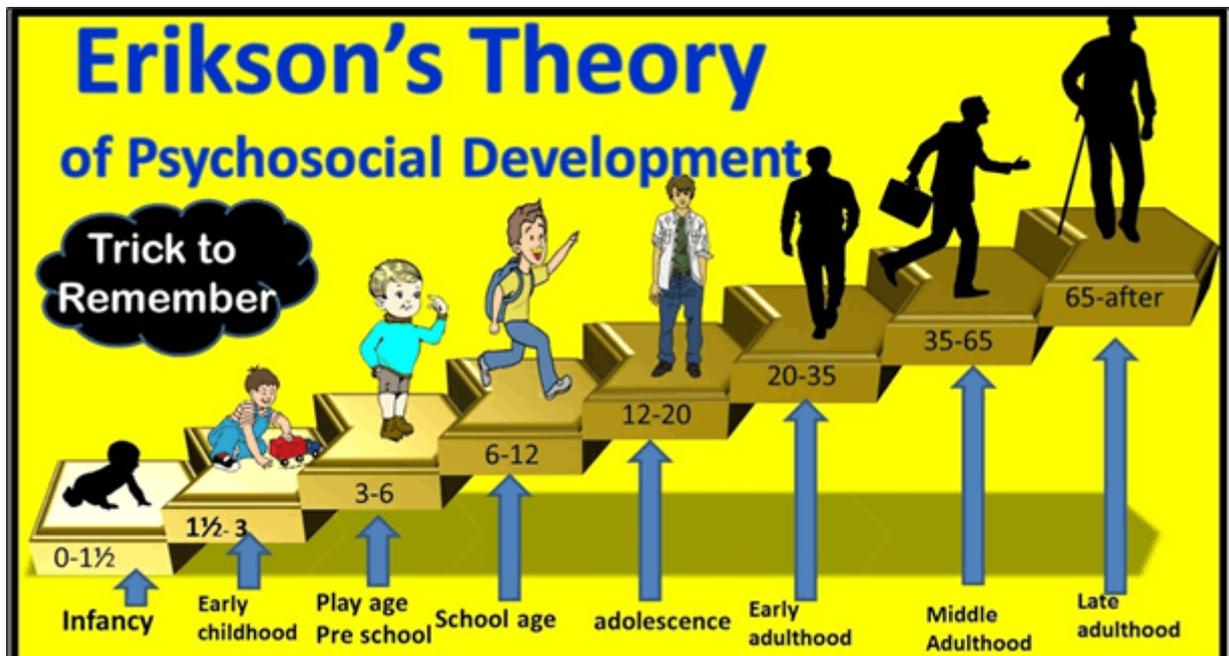


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Psychology Study Material: Erik Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial

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Erik Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial



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Development

- Student and follower of Sigmund Freud.
- Broke with his teacher over the fundamental view of what motivates/drives human behaviour.

- For Freud, it was 'biology' or more specifically the biological instincts of life and aggression (Eros and Thanatos)
- For Erikson, the most important force that drives human behaviour and which helps in the development of personality was "social interaction"
- His developmental theory of the "Eight Stages of Man" (Erikson, 1950) was unique and different in the sense that it covered the entire lifespan rather than 'childhood' and 'adolescent development'
- He believed that social environment combined with biological maturation results in a set of "crises" that must be resolved
- The individual passes through the "sensitive period" in different stages, which has to be resolved successfully before a new crisis is presented. The results of the resolution, whether successful or not, passed on to the next crisis and provide the foundation for its resolution
- He proposed eight stages of psychosocial development that have been discussed in detail in the section on cognitive development.

Trait Approaches

- Approaches that propose that there are certain traits that form the basis of an individual's personality.
- These approaches seek to identify the basic traits necessary to describe and understand personality.

Traits

- Enduring dimensions of personality characteristics that differentiate a person from others.
- Trait theories do not imply the absence or presence of different traits in different people i.e., either/or situation. These do not say that if one trait exists the other does not.
- These theories assume that some people are relatively high on some traits whereas, some are low on the same traits.
- The difference in people in terms of these traits is a matter of degree or extent to which the traits exist and manifest them. Some people have more of one trait and less of other ones.
- The degree to which a trait is present can be quantified e. g. "depression" is a tendency found in people; some have it more and some less
- Similarly, "friendliness" ; some are more friendly and some less
- The point to remember is that all traits may exist in all, but these vary in the degree of impact.

