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Critique on Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

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Piaget's stage theory focuses on the development of knowledge from within the subject and is not dependent on external factors. He divides a child's development into four stages: the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage. He pairs these stages with age periods of a child's life that the child goes through a particular stage during a particular age period.

Piaget begins with the sensorimotor stage which begins at birth up to two years. By using their senses and body, an infant learns the world from movement and sensations. I do not particularly agree with this completely. I believe that the child learns a lot from their senses and motor skills; however, I feel there is much more to say in these early years. There is much more that happens during the first two years since birth, such as caretaking, understanding other human's actions and verbiage.

The preoperational stage begins after year two until age seven. This stage of Piaget's stage theory, focuses on the child thinking symbolically and understand how words correlate to objects. This stage, I disagree with mainly that the child tends to be egocentric and that the child only learns how words correlate to objects in the first seven years. I know many children, under the age of seven, who have developed intelligence far beyond what is described in Piaget's preoperational stage. I believe that the child learns way more about language and other people's feelings and/or emotions during this period of their life.

From age seven to eleven, Piaget proposes his concrete operational stage. During this period, he suggests that the child now begins to think logically instead of symbolically. This stage is where Piaget believes reasoning is developed and the child understands and thinks more logically. This stage overlaps with my argument of the prior stage. I believe this happens in previous years; yet, I believe it swells into this age period as well.

Piaget's final stage is the formal operational stage. He suggests this stage continues for the rest of the child's life. It is the period in which the child learns to think abstractly and about morals, ethics, and philosophy. I think this also begins earlier than Piaget proposes; however, I agree this is an ongoing stage of life.

In conclusion, I believe Piaget's Stage Theory is an interesting approach to describe cognitive development. I believe it lacks the influence of external factors that Vygotsky's theory covers. I think it does a decent job at portraying cognitive development due to internal factors in a child's premature growth and development.