Unit 2

Developmental Psychology

Learning outcomes

After studying this unit, you should:

- Understand the different perspectives of the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of child development
- Understand the different biological, social, and cognitive theories of child development and the cultural aspects underlying childhood
- Understand child development from different cultural perspectives.

Introduction

Human development is a complex process characterised by physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains. This development is, to a great extent, shaped by a person's socio-cultural context (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). For that reason, it is impossible to separate someone's culture and context in fully explaining his/her development, since these aspects are considered to be part of our fabric, composition or make-up as human beings (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). For example, self-concept, self-esteem, and identity development can only be adequately understood within someone's social-cultural contexts and values (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). Unfortunately, most frames of reference in explaining optimal development in human beings seem to be largely determined by Western and European standards (Schwartz et al., in Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). This calls for an urgent transformation of education systems on the African continent.

The emergence of psychology in Europe created a vast body of knowledge and theories of human development, all of which have some distortions or limitations. Developmental psychology, however, is an area that is more susceptible to cultural influences, since the cultural guidance of psychology can be observed wherever it has taken place. Like many other imports in Africa, developmental psychology has remained replicative and imitative of Western psychology. The cultural context should organise developmental psychology in Africa – this means that African children, parents, and developmental psychologists should act and think within their cultural frame of reference.

2.1 Development in Childhood

Child development is marked by several developmental processes that promote growth and prepare the child to function as an adult in society.

2.1.1 Biological Development in Childhood

Infancy is a time of rapid brain development, during which many connections between brain cells are formed, and many others are lost (Bruer, 1999). A dramatic increase in synaptic connections marks brain development in childhood. At birth, the baby's neural connections are minimal. As the child grows, the neurons become far more interconnected, and s/he is ready for the experiences that will create these connections (Santrock, 2003).

Newborns come into the world equipped with several genetically wired reflexes (McMullen, 2013). Some of these persist throughout life, while others weaken or disappear within a few months or soon after birth. Reflexes such as sucking and blinking promote survival (McMullen, 2013). An infant develops motor skills beyond mere reflexes through maturation and learning. A typical infant is crawling by six months and walking by 13 months. Although many changes are governed by maturation, some research indicates that life experiences, and the prenatal period, could affect brain development. After infancy, the child's growth rate slows, and most children grow between 50.8 and 76.2 mm a year, until puberty. The child's motor coordination also improves, and s/he can perform more sophisticated motor tasks such as tying his/her shoes or riding a bicycle (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002).

A child's behaviour results from many converging factors: the developing nervous system, the body's physical properties and movement possibilities, and environmental support for the acquisition of these skills (Ulrich, 2010). Thus, both nature and nurture are involved in the child's development. Motor skills and perceptual skills are vitally linked. Babies

continually coordinate their movements with the information they perceive through their senses, to learn how to maintain their balance, reach for objects in space, and move across various surfaces. Moving from one place to another in the environment teaches children how objects and people look from different perspectives, and whether surfaces can support their weight (Santrock, 2003). Furthermore, infants have more highly developed sensory, perceptual, and cognitive abilities than newborn babies. Although infants cannot focus on distant objects, they can focus on objects that are close by (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002).

2.1.2 Social Development in Childhood

Social development is defined as the development of self-awareness, attachment to caregivers, and relationships with other people (Coon & Mitterer, 2012). Social development is rooted in emotional attachment and the need for physical contact, as infants first form an emotional bond with an adult. Parents are the most important influences in children's early social development. Later, playing with other children extends a child's social life beyond the family (Coon & Mitterer, 2012). Although infants younger than one year old seldom play with each other, they tend to show an interest in each other. Still, they do not have enough social skills to continue any meaningful social interactions. From 1–2 years, children begin to engage in social play which is mostly characterised by parallel play; thus, two or more infants might play at the same time, in the same place, but almost independently. After about age two, children start playing with each other more often. Their social and emotional development depends partly on how successfully they form friendships with other children (Kalat, 1996).

The core of a child's social development is in emotional attachment or a close emotional bond with his/her primary caregivers. Babies respond more or less equally to everyone for the first few months. By two or three months, most babies prefer their mothers to strangers. Shortly after around seven months, babies begin to form attachments to other people, such as their fathers, grandparents, and siblings. A direct sign of emotional

attachment appears around 8–12 months. At this time, babies display *separation anxiety* (crying and signs of fear) when left alone or with a stranger. The key to secure attachment is a caregiver who is accepting of, and sensitive to, the baby's signals and rhythms (Coon & Mitterer, 2012).

As children grow, they learn to form satisfying relationships with others, and get to know the rules and standards needed to live in a social world. Thus, they learn how to act with parents and friends, and what is right and wrong. Two complementary processes of integration and differentiation contribute to a child's social development. (i) ***Integration*** includes our efforts to get along with others, to regulate behaviour or act in accordance with social codes and standards, and to develop a conscience. Integration connects us to society, through relationships and responsibilities. (ii) ***Differentiation*** is the formation of our unique social identity and personality. Through differentiation, we develop a sense of self, recognise our unique characteristics, and understand the implications of our sex role, family role, and social status for our identity (Bourne & Russo, 1998).

Children start to deal with identity issues in middle childhood. According to Erikson (1968), identity is a self-portrait composed of many pieces, including the career a person wants to pursue, his/her country of origin, and how intensely s/he identifies with his/her cultural heritage. Around middle childhood, children start to ask questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I want to be when I grow up?" As they look for answers, they pay close attention to their social contexts, such as home, neighbourhood, school, and community. The process of identity development helps children navigate some challenging and awkward social issues as they interact with their peers. This is critical, because identity is who a person is, and represents a synthesis and integration of self-understanding (Erikson, 1968). As Vygotsky (1962) argues, a child's identity development is significantly influenced by his/her socio-cultural contexts, including interactions with more knowledgeable members of society. For example, in many African cultures, a person's identity is attached to his/her place of origin or cultural context. Hence, helping African

children navigate the challenges of their ethnic identity, by providing opportunities to experience strong African values and attributes with pride, is critical. It is, therefore, important that African children develop a positive ethnic identity as Africans (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019).

2.1.3 Cognitive Development in Childhood

Cognitive development refers to transitions in individuals' thinking patterns, including reasoning, remembering, problem-solving, etc. (Weiten, 2013). Children are not born with the knowledge and cognitive skills to make sense of, and engage with, the world – they learn or grow into these skills, as they develop. African parents, caregivers, and peer mentors use tacit cultural techniques and strategies that provoke the cognitive faculties to induce behavioural and affective changes. African parents give children responsibilities from an early age by making tasks fun, assigning chores to them, and engaging them in real-life interactions (Nsamenang, 2013, p. 15). In most cultures, this offers children opportunities to begin to make sense of the adult roles towards which they are directed from an early age (Rogoff et al., 1991). Furthermore, participative pedagogies and interpersonal processes of child-to-child interactions strengthen relational individuation and social integration through "child work" in familial and social life.

Based on perceived child states and milestones of human ontogenesis, African parents assign sequential cultural tasks to the developmental stages they identify. This helps them organise child development as a sociogenic process, with cultural beliefs and practices that guide systematic socialisation, education, and the expectations required for each ontogenetic stage (Nsamenang, 2013, p. 15). As a result, this conceptualisation of human ontogenesis differs from individualistic conceptualisations.

Task 1

In a discussion forum on myUnisa with your e-tutor, reflect with your peers on the agencies that contributed to your development and that of those around you. Your discussion should reflect the biological, social, and cognitive domains of development in childhood.

NB: Please note that it is compulsory for you to participate in these discussions.

2.2 Theories of Human Development

The theories of human development offer explanations for the origins and functions of human behaviour and the changes that can be expected under certain conditions, or from one period of life to the next (Newman & Newman, 2016). It is important to look at these concepts closely: A ***theory*** is an orderly, integrated set of statements that describes, explains, and predicts behaviour (Berk, 2007). Theories are important for a number of reasons: (i) they allow us to understand and predict the behaviour of some aspect of the world, (ii) they give meaning to the facts we discover about the world and serve as a framework within which to interpret facts, and integrate new information with previously acquired knowledge, (iii) they help explain observations and contribute to the body of knowledge and, (iv) if verified by research, they provide a sound basis for practical action (Newman & Newman, 2016).

The term *development* refers to systematic qualitative and quantitative changes that occur in an individual's biological, psychological, social, and emotional capabilities over his/her lifespan (Bourne & Russo, 1998). The term implies that the change occurs over time and has a direction. That direction is usually from simple to more complex, from less organised and coordinated to more organised and coordinated, or from less integrated to more integrated (Newman & Newman, 2016). To a large extent, the theories involve the study of child development, because the most significant changes occur from infancy

through adolescence (Christensen, 2010). The study of human development therefore focuses on describing patterns of constancy and change across a person's lifespan, and on identifying the underlying processes that account for those patterns.

2.2.1 *The Psychosocial Developmental Theory*

Erikson's (1968) Psychosocial Developmental Theory describes growth and change throughout life, focusing on social interaction and conflicts that arise during different stages of development. Erikson, who believed that social interaction and experiences play decisive roles, conducted a study involving other cultural groups, so his theory is considered to be universal. The theory posits that people evolve through eight stages of development over their lifespan. Each stage is marked by a *psychosocial crisis* (thus, a problem that must be dealt with at that particular time) which serves as a turning point in his/her psychosocial development (Weiten & Hassim, 2016; Whitbourne et al., 2009). If a crisis is managed successfully, the positive component is absorbed into the emerging ego, and further healthy development of the individual is assured. Conversely, failure to manage a crisis successfully will result in a negative component (Hornberger, 2006). These stages are briefly discussed below.

2.2.2 Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage 1: Trust versus mistrust (0–18 months). During this stage, infants are uncertain about the world in which they live, and depend entirely on adults to attend to their basic needs such as food, clothes, shelter, and safety (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). When children's basic needs are met, they develop a sense of trust and hope that other people will be there as a source of support when crises arise in the future. Conversely, when these needs are not met, children develop a sense of mistrust towards themselves and the world in general, leading to fear and the belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable (Cherry, 2022).

Stage 2: Autonomy versus shame and doubt (2–3 years). At this stage, the child discovers that s/he has many skills and abilities, and begins to take personal responsibility for feeding, dressing and bathing (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). Erikson stated that it is critical that parents allow their children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging environment which is tolerant of failure. If children in this stage are encouraged and supported, they develop a sense of independence and autonomy, and this leads to the virtue of will (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). They also become more confident and secure in their ability to survive in the world. If children are criticised, overly controlled, or forced into activities which they do not choose, they begin to feel inadequate in their ability to survive, and may then become overly dependent on others, lack self-esteem, and feel a sense of shame or doubt their abilities (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

Stage 3: Initiative versus guilt (3–5 years). Central to this stage is play, as it provides children with the opportunity to explore their interpersonal skills through initiative activities, such as planning and making up games with others. If given the opportunity to initiate actions, children develop a sense of initiative, and feel secure in their ability to lead others and make decisions. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of purpose. Conversely, if this opportunity is taken away through criticism or control, children develop a sense of guilt, and their self-esteem may suffer (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

Stage 4: Industry (competence) versus inferiority (6–11 years). At this stage, the challenge of learning to function socially is extended beyond the family, to the social world. During this stage, the peer group gains greater significance and becomes a major source of the child's self-esteem. The child now feels the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies which are valued by society, and begins to develop a sense of pride in his/her accomplishments. If children are encouraged and rewarded for their initiative, they feel industrious and confident in their ability to achieve goals and develop competence (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). If this initiative is discouraged, the child

begins to doubt his/her abilities and may fail to reach his/her full potential. This leads to feelings of inferiority and incompetence (Cherry, 2022).

Stage 5: Identity versus role confusion (12–18 years). During adolescence, individuals strive to discover who they are, thus developing a sense of identity. This is a major stage of development, where adolescents have to learn the roles they will occupy as adults. Adolescents become more independent and look at their future in terms of careers, relationships, families, etc. They also want to belong to a society and fit in. During this stage, the body image of the adolescent changes. Erikson (1968) asserted that adolescents might feel uncomfortable about their bodies for a while, until they can adapt and "grow into" the changes. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of fidelity. By contrast, failure to develop a sense of identity can lead to role confusion, which leads to the individual not being sure about him/herself or his/her place in society (McLeod, 2013).

Stage 6: Intimacy versus isolation (19–40 years). The primary goal of young adulthood is to establish a stable and intimate sexual relationship with another person. People at this stage seek relationships that will lead to long-term commitments with someone other than a family member. Completing this stage can lead to happy relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. At this stage, the virtue of love develops as well. However, avoiding intimacy and fearing commitment and relationships can result in isolation, loneliness, and depression (McLeod, 2013).

Stage 7: Generativity versus stagnation (40–65 years). In middle adulthood, bearing children or creating change that benefits other people, becomes the central task. During adulthood, individuals continue building their lives, and accepting career and family responsibilities. The successful completion of this stage leads to generativity, which characterises people who guide and nurture their children or other young people, and contribute to their communities. Conversely, failure to express oneself in this way can

lead to stagnation, where individuals feel unproductive and uninvolved, with no meaningful accomplishments (Cherry, 2022).

Stage 8: Integrity versus despair (65 to death). People look back in old age (or late adulthood) and reflect on their lives. They compare what they had set out to do, to what they were able to achieve. If they have accomplished their goals, they have a sense of integrity. Conversely, people who have failed to resolve crises in other stages tend to look back on their lives with feelings of regret, despair, and bitterness (Krause & Hayward, 2012).

Erikson's psychosocial stages of development may not be universal to all African communities. For example, he emphasises the developing child's competition, independence, and egoism, whereas the African perspective emphasises cooperation, altruism, and interdependence. Nonetheless, Erikson's is a good theory that focuses on the role of society and culture in human development. An individual's development is viewed through the society in which s/he lives, which provides an understanding of the cultural influence on an individual's development and behaviour.

4.2.3 *Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory*

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) is one of the most prominent theorists who focused on what children knew and how they knew it. Piaget's (1936) Cognitive Developmental Theory (see also Piaget & Cook, 1952) is concerned with a person's thought processes, investigating how these influence how we understand and interact with the world. He believed that children move through four stages of mental development, and that they reason and think completely differently from one stage to the next (Berk, 2007). These stages are briefly discussed here.

4.2.3.1 Stages of Cognitive Development

Stage 1: *Sensorimotor stage* (birth to two years). Infants use their ability to sense and move, to acquire information about the world around them. By actively exploring their environments with their eyes, mouths, and fingers, infants begin to understand how the world works. During the final six months of this stage, infants develop the ability to mentally represent or think about objects that are not in their immediate environment. This ability is called ***symbolic representation***. Another major achievement during this stage is the development of ***object permanence***. This refers to an understanding that objects and people continue to exist, even if they are no longer visible (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). For example, infants who have attained object permanence begin to search for hidden toys because they realise that the objects still exist, even though they do not physically see them.

Stage 2: Pre-operational stage (2–6 years). Children gradually improve their use of mental images during this stage. However, this stage has some limitations. Children's thinking is still illogical, because they have not yet acquired the cognitive operations needed for logical thinking. They also lack the ability for ***thought conservation*** – the ability to understand that quantities may remain the same, regardless of changes in their appearance (Swartz et al., 2011). For example, children younger than age seven commonly say that the quantity of liquid changes when it is poured into a differently shaped container. This lack of conservation in preschool children is attributed to *centration* (a tendency to focus on just one feature of a problem, neglecting other important aspects) and ***irreversibility*** (an inability to reverse perceived actions) (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Another noticeable characteristic of this stage is *egocentrism.* This is the tendency to view the world from one's own perspective, and to have difficulty recognising another person's point of view (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2013; Weiten, 2013). In addition, children's thinking often displays ***animism*** or the belief that all things are living, and they tend to attribute human-like qualities to inanimate objects (Weiten, 2013).

Stage 3: Concrete operational stage (6–12 years). This stage is characterised by the development of mental operations (thus, internal transformations and manipulations of mental/cognitive structures). At this stage, children's cognition is transformed into the more organised reasoning of the school-age child. Children reason best when allowed to perform operations on images of tangible objects and actual events. The problems of irreversibility and centration are now mastered. Thus, the child can now mentally reverse an action (***reversibility***) and focus on more than one feature of a problem simultaneously (***decentration***). The newfound ability to coordinate several aspects of a problem helps the child to appreciate that there are several ways to look at things. This ability leads to a decline in egocentrism (Weiten, 2013; Weiten & Hassim, 2016). Also, during this stage, the problem of conservation is readily resolved, and thinking becomes more logical. Unfortunately, children at this stage still cannot handle abstract concepts (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2013).

Stage 4: Formal operational stage (12 years onwards). According to the theory, the peak of cognitive development is reached when the individual becomes capable of formal operational thinking, which is marked by emerging abstract thought and hypothetical reasoning. Children can reason systematically about abstract concepts such as liberty, love, and God at this stage. They can also reason about events that will happen, might have happened, and never happened. In addition to performing abstract reasoning, children become more scientific and logical in approaching problems. They are more likely to think through several alternatives more systematically. This methodical, scientific approach to problem-solving is called ***hypothetico-deductive reasoning***. It allows children to apply a general solution to a problem, and then deduce which factors are most important in generating the correct solution (Schacter et al., 2012).

Table 2.1 Piaget's stages of cognitive development

Stage	Development	Description

Sensorimotor	Birth to two years	Infants “think” by acting on the world with their eyes, ears, hands, and mouth
Pre-operational	2–6 years	Preschoolers use symbols to represent their earlier sensorimotor discoveries. Language development and make-believe play take place
Concrete	6–12 years	Children’s reasoning becomes logical. Mental operations of reversibility and decentration take place
Formal operational	12 years onwards	The capacity for abstraction allows adolescents to reason operationally, with symbols that do not refer to objects in the real world. They can think of possible outcomes for scientific problems

Adapted from Berk (2007)

According to Piaget, these stages are *universal*: every child in every culture goes through the same stages. These stages are also *invariant*: every child goes through the same sequence in the same order at roughly the same time. Moreover, Piaget believed that ***maturation*** – biologically constrained change – combines with the child’s experiences and activities in his/her world, to produce cognitive development (Schacter et al., 2012). Therefore, it is obvious that Piaget made a landmark contribution to psychology’s understanding of children – especially their cognitive development. The theory has influenced many scientific studies on cognitive development.

2.2.4 The Psychoanalytic Theory

In the 1930s, Sigmund Freud, a Viennese physician, sought a cure for emotionally troubled adults, by having them talk freely about painful events of their childhood. Freud came to believe that childhood experiences and unconscious desires influence behaviour, through his clinical work with patients with mental illnesses. Based on these recollections, he examined the unconscious motivations of his patients and constructed psychoanalysis (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). According to the theory, people move through a series of five stages (called psychosexual stages) in which they confront conflicts between biological

drives and social expectations. The term “sexual” is used to refer to many urges for physical pleasure. The way these conflicts are resolved, determines the individual’s ability to learn, get along with others, and cope with anxiety. His theory suggests that the energy of the libido is focused on different erogenous zones at specific stages. Failure to progress through a stage can result in fixation at that point in development, which Freud believed could influence adult behaviour. Completing each stage leads to the development of a healthy adult personality. Furthermore, Freud emphasised that the formation of a child’s personality is influenced by parents’ management of his/her sexual and aggressive drives at an early age (Krishnan, 2010). In Freud’s theory, the personality comprises three structures: the ***id***, ***ego***, and ***superego****.* These structures are presented in Figure 4.1 below and are discussed here.

Id: The pleasure-seeker. This is the primitive source of biological drives that operates according to the ***pleasure principle***. It is the reservoir of psychic energy, because it houses the raw biological urges (such as eating, sleeping, and so on) that energise human behaviour (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). The goal of the id is to pursue pleasure and satisfy the two biological drives for sex and aggression in an immediate fashion, and it dominates an infant’s behaviour (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011).

Ego: The executive negotiator. This is the conscious, rational, and decision-making component of the personality that operates according to the ***reality principle****.* The ego’s goal is to find and negotiate safe and socially acceptable ways of satisfying the id’s desires and the superego’s prohibitions (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011; Weiten & Hassim, 2016). As the ego operates in this fashion, children begin to internalise the values of their parents and the broader society around them, forming the superego structure (Berk, 2007).

Superego: The regulator. The superego is the moral component of personality that incorporates social standards about what is right or wrong, good or bad (Berk, 2007). Its goal is to apply the moral values of the parents, caregivers, and society, in satisfying the individual's wishes (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011). During the preschool years, children accept their parents' values and take these on in the form of their conscience, as they apply these standards to their behaviour. The ego now arbitrates between the id and the superego to satisfy both sets of demands (Berk, 2007). In some people, the superego can become irrationally demanding in its quest for moral perfection, and those people become plagued with excessive feelings of guilt (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

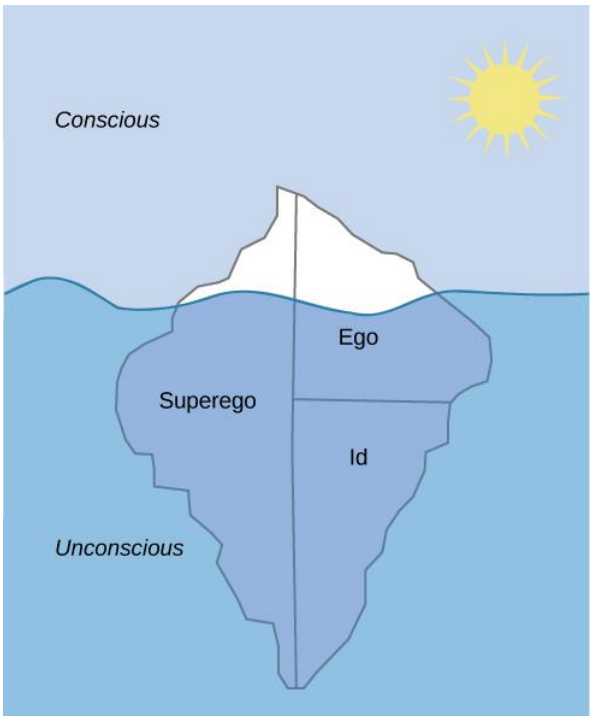

Figure 2.1 Freud's three structures of personality development

Adapted from: https://www.boundless.com/.../personality...personality.../freudian-psychoanalytic-theory...

According to Freud, the relations established among these personality structures during the preschool years, set the stage for adult personality. Freud therefore argued that behaviour is an outcome of an ongoing series of internal conflicts between the id, the ego,

and the superego. This is because the id wants to gratify its urges immediately, but the norms of society frequently dictate otherwise (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

2.2.4.1 The Psychosexual Stages of Development

Freud believed that human development occurs in five psychosexual stages, each of which has its unique developmental challenges or tasks. The manner in which these challenges are handled, supposedly shapes personality (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). In each stage, if parents or caregivers strike an appropriate balance of permitting neither too much nor too little of children's basic needs, those children grow into well-adjusted adults with the capacity for mature sexuality and invest in family life (Berk, 2007).

The process of ***fixation*** plays an important role in this regard. Fixation relates to a failure to move forward from one stage to another, in an appropriate manner. Fixation can be caused by excessive gratification of needs at a particular stage, or by the excessive frustration of those needs. Either way, fixation left over from childhood affects adult personality (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). These stages are presented in Table 4.2 below and are discussed here.

Stage 1: Oral stage (birth to 18 months). During this stage, the mouth is the centre of pleasure and conflict, and involves behaviours such as biting, chewing and sucking, as a source of pleasure. Freud attributed considerable importance to how the child is weaned from breast or bottle feeding. Fixation at this stage could lead to behaviours such as overeating, child-like dependence or smoking, later in life (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). Personality traits associated with the oral stage include, among others, depression, lack of trust, envy, and being demanding (Schacter et al., 2012).

Stage 2: Anal stage (2–3 years). The behaviours of infants change, and their pleasure is centred around the eliminative function, with toilet-training becoming crucial at this time

(Weiten & Hassim, 2016). A potential source of conflict is the child's desire to immediately expel faeces, against the parents' attempts to train the child into waiting to use the toilet. Individuals who have difficulties during this stage may develop a rigid personality and remain preoccupied with issues of control of others, themselves, and their emotions. Such individuals may be preoccupied with possessions, money, submission and rebellion, and concerns about cleanliness versus messiness (Schacter et al., 2012). The genital anxiety derived from severe toilet training could evolve into anxiety about sexual activities later in life (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

Stage 3: Phallic stage (3–5 years). Children discover that their genitalia provide them with a sense of pleasure at this stage. During this stage, the ***oedipal complex*** in boys and ***electra complex*** in girls emerge. Thus, children manifest sexual desires for their opposite-sex parent, accompanied by feelings of hostility towards the same-sex parent (Keenan & Evan, 2009; Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011). For example, the little boy may develop a sexual desire towards his mother. The boy also feels hostility toward his father, whom he views as a competitor for his mother's affection. Similarly, the little girl may develop a special attachment to her father. During this time, girls also notice that boys have different genitals and supposedly develop ***penis envy***. Accordingly, the little girl feels hostility toward her mother and blames the mother for the fact that she (the girl) does not have a penis. In Freud's view, healthy psychosexual development hinges on resolving the oedipal and electra conflicts, because continued hostility towards the same-sex parent may prevent the child from identifying adequately with that parent (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

Stage 4: Latency stage (5–13 years). During this stage, the child's sexuality is largely suppressed and becomes latent. The most important event during this stage involves expanding social contacts beyond the immediate family, as the child starts to focus on developing intellectual, creative, interpersonal, and athletic skills (Schacter et al., 2012). Freud believed that the most significant aspects of personality development occur during the first three psychosexual stages (before the age of 5). Therefore, he did not talk about

any form of fixation at the latency stage. With the onset of puberty, the child progresses into the genital stage.

Stage 5: Genital stage (13 years onwards). This is the time of coming together of the mature adult personality with a capacity to love, work, and relate to others in a mutually satisfying and reciprocal manner. During this stage, sexual urges re-appear, and the focus is on the genitals again. At this stage, the adolescent looks for appropriate peers towards whom s/he can aim or direct his/her sexual drive (Schacter et al., 2012; Weiten & Hassim, 2016). According to Freud, the quality of relationships and the degree of fulfilment experienced during this stage are influenced by how intrapsychic conflicts were resolved during the earlier stages of development.

Table 2.2 Freud's psychosexual stages of development

Stage	**Age**	**Erotogenic zone**	**Areas of conflict with carer**	**Associated personality features**
Oral	0–18 months	Mouth	Feeding, weaning	Talkative, dependent, addictive, needy
Anal	2–3 years	Anus/urethra	Toileting	Orderly, controlling, disorganised, sloppy
Phallic	3–5 years	Penis/clitoris	Masturbation (Oedipus conflict)	Flirtatious, vain, jealous, competitive
Latency	5–13 years	-	-	-
Genital	Adulthood	Penis/vagina	Adult responsibilities	Authentic investments in love and work, capacity for healthy adult relationships

Adapted from Schacter et al. (2012)

Freud's theory of personality development indicates the importance of resolving the conflicts at five psychosexual stages, dealing with fixation at any particular stage, and the importance of the first five years of life, as they form the basis for personality development.

2.2.5 The Sociocultural Theory

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) was a contemporary thinker. As his work became more widely published, his ideas have grown increasingly influential in areas such as child development, cognitive development, and education. Sociocultural theory, developed by Vygotsky (1962), posits that social interaction and culture play important roles in children's construction of knowledge. According to this theory, culture and social interactions are indispensable to children's interpretations and understanding of cultural expectations (Bodrova & Leong, 2008; Vygotsky, 1962). In Vygotsky's view, knowledge is distributed among people and in the environments in which they live. These environments are embedded in the cultural contexts of family, school, media, legal and religious institutions, and community organisations. According to Vygotsky, children's social interaction with more skilled adults and peers is inseparable from their knowledge development. Through this interaction, children learn to use the tools that will help them adapt and be successful in their culture. For example, if you regularly interact with children in their native language, you advance their language skills and communicate to them that that language is an important aspect of their culture. Therefore, this theoretical approach suggests that knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about language, childbirth practices, beauty, self-concept and identity development among children are advanced through interaction with others, within sociocultural contexts (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019).

An important concept in Sociocultural theory is ***the zone of proximal development***. This is the distance between the actual developmental level (determined by independent problem solving), and the level of potential development (determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers). Alternatively, this is the space between what a learner can do independently, and what s/he can do

with adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, Vygotsky believed that parents, caregivers, peers, and the culture at large were responsible for developing higher-order functions. The theory further posits that learning has its basis in interaction with other people. Once this has occurred, information is integrated on the individual level.

The sociocultural theory focuses not only on how others influence individual learning, but also on how cultural beliefs and attitudes affect how instruction and learning take place. According to Vygotsky, children are born with basic biological constraints in their minds. Each culture, however, provides what he referred to as “tools of intellectual adaptation”. These tools allow children to use their basic mental abilities in a way that is adaptive to the culture in which they live. For example, while one culture might emphasise memory strategies such as note-taking, other cultures might utilise tools such as reminders or rote memorisation. Vygotsky's theory also stressed the importance of play in learning. Caregivers and parents can utilise this knowledge, by providing children with plenty of opportunities for play experiences. Vygotsky believed that, by imagining and playing, children could expand their conceptual abilities and knowledge of the world. The Sociocultural theory has recently gained popularity, particularly in educational settings.

2.2.6 The Bioecological Systems Theory

Uri Bronfenbrenner’s (1917–2005) bioecological theory (1979) views human development within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environments (which include the physical, social, economic, spiritual, and political) (Naidoo et al., 2007). Human beings, Bronfenbrenner suggested, cannot develop in isolation, but do so within a system of relationships that include family and society (Krishnan, 2010). Therefore, Bronfenbrenner perceived the child–environment relationship as reciprocal: the environment influences the child, and the child influences the environment. In this model, development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity

and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

According to Bronfenbrenner, the environment is dynamic and ever-changing. The breadth of their microsystems changes whenever individuals add or let go of roles or settings in their lives. Throughout life, the shifts in contexts (or ***ecological transitions****),* such as starting school, entering the workforce, getting married, becoming a parent, and retiring, are often important turning points in development (Berk, 2007). From a functional perspective, this hierarchically organised system can be better understood within a related framework of the *Process, Person, Context* and *Time* (PPCT) model.

Process: This construct encompasses particular forms of interaction between an organism and the immediate environment, called ***proximal processes*** (or near processes) that operate over time, and are posited as the primary mechanisms producing human development. The power of these processes to influence development tends to vary substantially as a function of the characteristics of the developing person, the immediate and more remote environmental contexts, and the periods in which the proximal processes take place (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). There are also ***distal processes***, which include a family's ability to support a child, and interact with other environments of which the child is a part (e.g., access to community resources). Unlike the proximal processes, distal processes may have only an indirect influence on the child (Krishnan, 2010).

Person**:** There are three types of personal characteristics that are most influential in shaping the course of future development. First, ***dispositions*** can set proximal processes in motion in a particular developmental domain and continue to sustain their operation. Second, ***bioecological resources*** of ability, experience, knowledge, and skill are required for the effective functioning of proximal processes at a given stage of

development. Finally, ***demand characteristics*** invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that can foster or disrupt the operation of proximal processes. When these three factors are differentiated, a person develops a combination of patterns that can further account for differences in the direction and power of resultant proximal processes, and their developmental effects (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The child's characteristics are primarily determined by the influence of family, caregivers, or peers. For example, children with disabilities can be at greater risk of experiencing negative social relationships. Similarly, differences between boys and girls in their maturity, coping skills, reasoning, and so on contribute to differentials in social relationships. Moreover, personal variables such as age, gender, temperament, and illness can be linked to development and influence proximal processes, either directly or indirectly. For example, childcare practices (proximal processes) will differ based on a child's temperament and have an impact on his/her growth and development (Krishnan, 2010).

Context**:** It refers to the multiple venues modifying the proximal processes, including environments in which the child is in constant interaction – whether physical, social, or economic. The context constitutes five distinct concentric systems: *micro, meso, exo*, *macro* and *chrono*, each having either a direct or an indirect influence on a child's development. A fifth system, *chrono*, was later added to the theory to incorporate the dimension of time, as it relates to a child's environment. This may involve internal or external changes, such as physiological changes or events such as the loss of a parent (Krishnan, 2010).

Time: The time component encompasses various aspects, such as chronological age, duration, and the nature of periodicity. An event has varying degrees of impact on development, decreasing as time progresses. Events such as a parent's debilitating illness, divorce, or change of residence can have a more profound impact on young children than on older ones (Krishnan, 2010). Even though Bronfenbrenner

conceptualises developmental outcomes, person characteristics, context characteristics, process variables, and time variables, these components need to be understood within an interactional, holistic ecological system (Guhn & Goelman, 2011).

Furthermore, the theory states that human development must move beyond examining a child's biology. It is based on the thesis that children do not develop in isolation, but in a variety of contexts or environments in which they interact continuously. Development is not only shaped by the immediate environment, but also by interaction with the larger environment (Krishnan, 2010). These environmental structures or contexts are presented in Figure 4.2 below and are discussed here.

2.2.7 *Environmental structures in Bioecological Systems Theory*

The Bioecological Systems Theory is based on a number of environmental structures according to which individuals develop. These structures are:

***Microsystem*:** This is the innermost level, the one closest to the child, and the one with which the child is in direct contact. It encompasses social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing individual in a setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features (Krishnan, 2010; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This system consists of contexts such as family, peers, playmates, daycare, school, and neighbourhood where the proximal processes occur. The individual is not a passive recipient of experiences in these settings, but someone who helps to construct the settings (Christensen, 2010; Krishnan, 2010).

To understand development at this level, we must remember that all relationships are ***bidirectional***. For example, adults affect children's behaviour, but children's biologically and socially influenced characteristics (physical attributes, personalities, and capacities) also affect adults' behaviour. These bidirectional interactions often occur over time and have an enduring impact on development. Other individuals in the microsystem affect the

quality of any two-person relationship. Interaction is enhanced if they are supportive (Berk, 2007). Within the immediate environment of the microsystem, proximal processes operate to produce and sustain development, but their ability to do so, depends on the content and structure of the microsystems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

***Mesosystem*:** This is the second immediate layer, and it contains the microsystem. It comprises the linkages and processes between two or more settings containing the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The interaction that occurs in these settings may influence the development of a person. For example, what happens in a microsystem, such as the home in which a child lives, can influence what happens in the school or on the playground, and what happens in a school or on a playground can influence interactions at home (Christensen, 2010; Krishnan, 2010). A child's academic progress depends not just on the activities that take place in the classroom, but also on parental involvement in his/her school life, and on the extent to which academic learning is carried over into the home (Berk, 2007). The connection between other larger structures, such as a church or community, can also be expected to have distal processes at work, because they help the family to provide the necessary support the child needs. For example, counselling services available to the family in times of need can influence the functioning of the mesosystem (Krishnan, 2010).

***Exosystem*:** It contains the micro and meso systems, thereby affecting the wellbeing of all who come into contact with the child. It comprises social settings that do not contain the developing individual, but affect experiences in immediate settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Christensen, 2010; Krishnan, 2010). For example, paid maternity and paternity leave are ways in which work settings can help parents rear children and, indirectly, enhance the development of both adults and children. This system's support can also be informal. Children are affected by their parents' social networks – friends and extended family members who provide advice, companionship, and financial assistance. Research confirms the negative impact a breakdown has on exosystem activities. Families that are socially isolated or affected by unemployment show increased rates of conflict and child abuse (Berk, 2007).

Macrosystem: The outermost context layer is the macrosystem. This describes the overall societal culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include developing and industrialised countries, socioeconomic status, poverty and ethnicity. The boundary is defined by national and cultural borders, laws and rules (Christensen, 2010). It may be considered a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture. Aspects of the macrosystem that influence other lower layers include cultural characteristics, political upheaval or economic disruption, all of which can solely or collectively shape development. For example, cultures with more liberal divorce laws are more likely to have more single-parent families. This, in turn, affects income, hindering the opportunities available to the child, such as participation in sports (Krishnan, 2010). The priority that the macrosystem gives to the needs of children and adults affects the support they receive at the inner levels of the environment. For example, in countries that set high standards for childcare and workplace benefits for employed parents, children are more likely to have favourable experiences in their immediate settings (Berk, 2007).

***Chronosystem*:** This system is not a specific context. Instead, it refers to an individual's environment with its dynamic, ever-changing nature. The prefix *chrono* means "time" (Berk, 2007). This system encompasses change or consistency over time, not only in the characteristics of an individual, but also in the environment in which s/he lives. Examples of this aspect are changes over the life course in the family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, and place of residence (Krishnan, 2010). Individuals select, modify and create many of their own settings and experiences. How they do so, depends on factors such as age; physical, intellectual, and personality characteristics; and environmental opportunities. Therefore, in Bioecological Systems Theory, development is neither controlled by environmental circumstances nor driven by the inner dispositions of an individual. Instead, people are products and producers of their environments. So, both people and their environments form a network of interdependent effects (Berk, 2007).

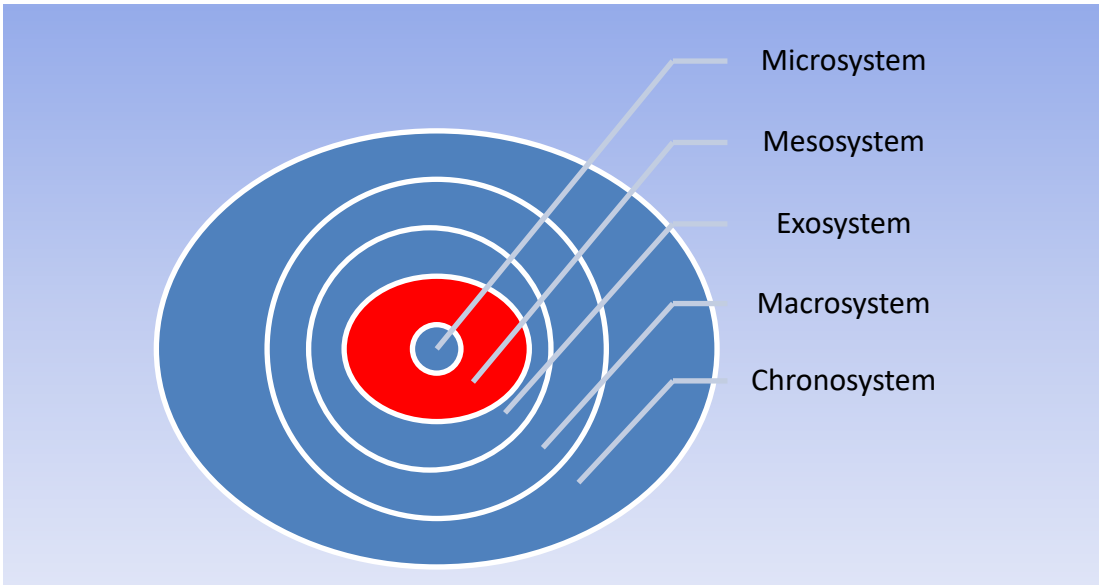

Figure 2.2 Structures of Bioecological Systems Theory

Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1994)

The reciprocity of the effects of one system on another, however, has not been established. That is, it has not yet been proven that there will be mutual support from one system for another, and the expectations of the two systems may also be conflicting. For example, in one instance, the family may expect an adolescent to further his/her studies through tertiary education, whereas the adolescent may also experience pressure from friends to travel, instead of studying further. Therefore, the tension that arises from conflicting expectations may cause some form of internal conflict for the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The theory can be used in conjunction with other theories as a complimentary level of explanation to supplement and support individual accounts of psychosocial development. Moreover, the theory provides a useful way of understanding the processes involved in the development of an individual from the bioecological perspective.

2.3 Developmental Psychology from an African Perspective

Nsamenang (2005) interprets development in Africa as the acquisition and growth of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competencies required to engage fully in family and society. Each stage of a child's ontogenetic development is marked by distinctive developmental tasks, which are defined within the framework of cultural realities and developmental agendas. Therefore, child development can be interpreted as the acquisition and growth of competencies in the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains, and the moral maturity required to competently engage in the world (i.e., family, community, and society at large).

The foundational principle of Afrocentric developmental ethos is ***emergence***. This is because, in African family traditions, a child is not actually "raised" but primed to "emerge" into maturity, mainly through his/her developmental learning in self-initiated efforts. Children's self-education occurs in participative learning processes in their families and communities, especially in the peer cultures of early childhood. This learning is fostered through indigenous African parenting values and practices. African parents or caregivers prime their children to learn self-care and engage in family chores. This sensitises them from an early age to seek out others, and extract skills and social competencies from the social fields in which their siblings and peers are accredited partners, determining their way into the world away from home. From toddlerhood, most children begin to "distance" themselves from their parents, increasingly coming under the influence of their peer cultures at various stages of development. Older peers or siblings voluntarily supervise and mentor young children. Consequently, peer culture is central to children's learning and development.

Peer groups are qualified as the handiest companions, socialisers, and caregivers during the toddler and childhood years. This is because African participative pedagogies embrace educational ideas and caregiving practices into family traditions, children's daily routines, and interactive processes, in a manner that systematically transforms the child

into a cultural “agent” of his/her own developmental learning from an early age. Children “extract” social, emotional, practical, cognitive, relational, and other situated intelligence from the home, society, and peer culture through contextual embedding and active participation. In so doing, they “graduate” from one activity setting and participative sector of the peer culture to another, steadily maturing towards adulthood (Nsamenang, 2013). African children’s processes of extracting multiple intelligences from different environments are similar to the interactional-extractive learning process described by Piaget. However, African processes differ in entirely involving child-to-child inter-stimulation and mentorship, whereas Piaget highlights that children learn through their own efforts and actions in the world (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2006). This means that children initiate and promote significant self-education and developmental influences.

2.3.1 Intra-cultural Variations in Socialisation Values

Adolescence is unknown in many non-industrialised countries. Instead, adulthood begins with the onset of puberty and is commonly celebrated with traditional rites of passage (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002). Socialisation is defined as the process of learning to behave in a way which is acceptable to society, and behaviour is dictated by the beliefs and actions of a certain culture. Socialisation values differ across cultures and social ecologies. This means there can be differences in socialisation values within the same ethnic or cultural group. This is in line with the African proverb that states, “it takes a village to raise a child”, because the majority of African children are socialised by multiple agents such as families, peers, parents, and caregivers. Using the African lens to understand child development improves our understanding of socialisation processes from the African perspective.

In keeping with the well-known African proverb that “it takes a village to raise a child”, cultures vary widely with regard to who in the village has the responsibility for childcare and what behaviours are appropriate for particular caregiving roles at different ages and over time (Rogoff et al.,1993). In any culture, women (usually mothers) are the primary caregivers of infants (Logsdon, 2006). Even so, there is a great diversity in the specific

behaviours involved in caring for infants across and within cultures. Although fathers may spend less time than mothers with their babies, this does not mean they are less involved or less capable of caring for babies. Some studies suggest that fathers are now spending more time with their babies than previous generations did. Ethnic groups vary in the extent to which extended family members assume child-rearing responsibilities. For example, extended kin networks have been an important source of support and strength for black families (Bourne & Russo, 1998).

Childhood socialisation is a social and collective process. This means that a child not only produces knowledge on his/her own, but does so in a community of those who share a sense of belonging to a culture. Many African cultural ethnic groups promote this kind of socialisation. African children take an active role in managing their learning through observation and social participation. In these communities, children develop largely through their own initiative, gradually increasing their participation in activities that foster culturally valued goals.

2.3.2 Newborns

Childbirth commences the process of child development. For centuries, the process of childbirth has occurred in the home. Birth attendants are women who assist mothers during childbirth, and they can be found in many African cultures, including the Luhya tribe of Kenya (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). These women are experts in customary midwifery and are known and respected in the community. This practice minimises the stress of a pregnant woman, since the midwife is usually familiar with the women whom she assists in childbirth. Less stress during childbirth promotes relaxation in the mother and enhances the childbirth experience. This positive experience enhances parent–infant interaction after birth, which increases the positive social and emotional development of both mother and infant. However, this trend is gradually changing, and children are being delivered at the hospital by nurses and doctors. Unfortunately, home deliveries are now frowned upon, while hospital births are viewed as progressive because of the Western

influence. The problem is that not every family in Africa can afford the hospital bill, nor the means to get to the hospital in time for a safe delivery. It would be helpful for traditional midwives to work alongside a trained nurse and doctor, so that emergencies are taken care of if they happen, and the traditional midwifery expertise is preserved (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019).

When a child is born in an African family, it is tradition that the baby and the mother remain inside the house for a few days, before coming out. In many cultures, this is a ten-day waiting period that extends from birth to the umbilical cord dropping off (Nalwadda et al., 2015). Only the mother and the women assisting with nursing the baby have access to the baby. This is because the baby is in a state of contamination (or fragile) and must not be touched by others. As a result, the baby needs extra care and protection, including shielding from wind, sunshine, cold, and disease. By secluding the mother and the baby, the baby is protected from the energies of different people. This practice helps the mother to rest and regain her strength, establish breastfeeding, and bond with the baby. For as long as the umbilical cord is attached to the baby, the child is “attached” to the mother’s womb through the umbilical cord. After the umbilical cord falls off, it is buried at a place that is symbolic for different cultures, to symbolise the continuity of life, and that the baby is no longer attached to the mother but to the family and community into which s/he was born. The ceremony closes the newborn stage and, by weaning, the child enters the childhood period after three months (this period may differ slightly, due to varying cultural practices). Weaning is an indicator used to determine the child’s readiness to enter childhood. This is in opposition to Erik Erikson’s theory: unlike in Erikson’s theory, rituals play a role in assisting the child to adjust to his/her new environment. Rituals form part of the beginning and end of a child’s developmental stage. They serve as a rite of passage that dictates how a child should be treated and addressed during a particular developmental stage.

2.3.3. Childhood

This is a stage that introduces the child to specific roles which s/he will have to assume in society and is applicable to many African communities. Children are allocated certain gender-specific duties and chores from an early age, depending on their level of readiness (Cunningham, 2001; Klein et al., 2009). Girls are allocated household chores such as caring for their siblings, cooking, cleaning, and collecting wood. Boys are allocated chores such as cow or goat herding, milking of cows, slaughtering of chickens, and hunting. When adults encourage the child, this behaviour is reinforced and results in the learning and internalisation of roles. The introduction of different roles serves an important psychological function. *First,* the child gets an opportunity to associate with, and learn, certain cultural values from others, through play. *Second*, the child learns to assume a well-defined responsibility. *Third*, these chores present chances for growth, development, and competence. *Finally*, socialisation is enhanced, leaving the child with a sense of belonging to the community.

The Girl Child

A girl child is traditionally considered to be a close ally to the mother, and the mother has the responsibility of teaching her daughter chores from an early age (Cunningham, 2001). The mother is expected to lead the girl until she reaches about the age of 12, when the process of coming of age begins. This period is marked by menstruation. Once the girl child starts menstruating, she is ready to be put through the ritual. During this process, she is taught morals that will help her to conduct herself well later in marriage and in society. Coming of age usually involves a celebration whereby the family prepares traditional foods and beer (celebrations vary in different cultures).

The Boy Child

Traditional circumcision and initiation into manhood are ancient initiation rites practised by many African cultural communities (Marck, 1997). The ritual is traditionally intended as a teaching institution, to prepare young males for the responsibilities of manhood. In

traditional communities, a male who has not undergone initiation is referred to as a boy, regardless of his age, and is not allowed to take part in male activities such as tribal meetings. Before the young person enters initiation, several ceremonies take place, in which the family gathers to seek blessings and send him off. Young initiates are reintroduced to their ancestors; they are taught about their history, discipline, and how to be responsible family men and contribute to their society. At the end of the circumcision rite, a ceremony to honour and bring back home the initiates is held in the community.

These rituals provide education, introduce youths to adulthood, and enable them to face the realities of life. It is also believed that, through these rites, children gain knowledge of the historical origins of the tribe, their language and culture, and learn the values of *ubuntu* (humanity) that prevail in many African cultures (van Breda, 2019). The process of initiation serves various psychological functions (Morinis, 1985). First, initiation symbolises rebirth and serves as a reflection of a positive move from childhood to adulthood. This process enhances self-esteem among in-group members and encourages cooperation among group members. Second, the process signifies separation and the end of children's dependency on their parents. This results in youth identifying with their peers. Third, the process encourages a change in behaviour which encourages youths to assume adult responsibilities. Finally, the process represents social and collective achievement among the youth, their family members, and the larger community.

Task 2

In a discussion forum on myUnisa with your e-tutor, discuss a rite of passage in your culture and how it links to a person's development.

NB: Please note that it is compulsory for you to participate in these discussions.

2.3.4 The Roles of Riddles and Indigenous Games in Child Development

Riddles are part of culture and are often shrouded in taboos (Banda & Morgan, 2013). African riddles have significant educational value, and contribute to children's full participation in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of their communities. These riddles contribute by nurturing critical thinking and transmitting indigenous knowledge to children. Riddles refer to nature as a whole, and to the material and spiritual culture of the people. Knowledge of riddles helps children, adolescents, and adults establish their identity as individuals and members of various social groups. Riddles also mediate ambiguity and stimulate cognitive re-examination. They promote unity and group cohesion.

Indigenous games are gaining popularity and are being implemented in national sports in South Africa. Indigenous games include all aspects of traditional and contemporary play cultures that are associated with a certain culture and with identifiable communities. They are generally accepted as an adequate reflection of their communities' heritage and social identities. These games are linked to the traditions of a cultural group, being of local origin and requiring physical skill, strategy and/or chance. Indigenous games are symbolic cultural expressions from a particular community, and children are the bearers and creators of culture through these games and games culture. These games are also adapted to satisfy various physical, psychological, social, and cultural needs. Indigenous games within the African context reflect the circumstances, traditions, and cultures of the various population groups and communities which the people have identified as part of their cultural heritage.

Indigenous games serve several purposes in children's development, including improving their physical activity, teaching them life skills and establishing cultural connectedness, among other things. Indigenous games have also been shown to promote mathematics teaching in multicultural classes. ***Tinketo/diketo*** and ***morabaraba*** (a Southern Sotho name) are the two most popular games among black South African children (Pressreader,

2018). The benefits of indigenous games include motor coordination and logical reasoning skills. *Morabaraba* stimulates strategic and problem-solving skills. Research linked *morabaraba* to mathematical problem-solving skills because it allows for a simplified lesson on the area and perimeter of squares. Just like chess, a player only makes a move that will help him/her win the game. For example, each player in the game plans his/her next move and applies strategies with all the rules in mind. Also, the player considers the opponent's next move, in line with the move s/he is making and the fact that the player must follow those rules. These activities are similar to problem solving, which requires a problem to be solved according to established rules. Children's confidence also develops as they become more familiar with these games. Playing indigenous games benefits their physical development and brain stimulation, while allowing them to experience and let their imagination run wild (Parsons, 2011; Pressreader, 2018). Indigenous game content, like social games, serve as a medium for socialisation and the development of children, enabling them to reach their full potential.

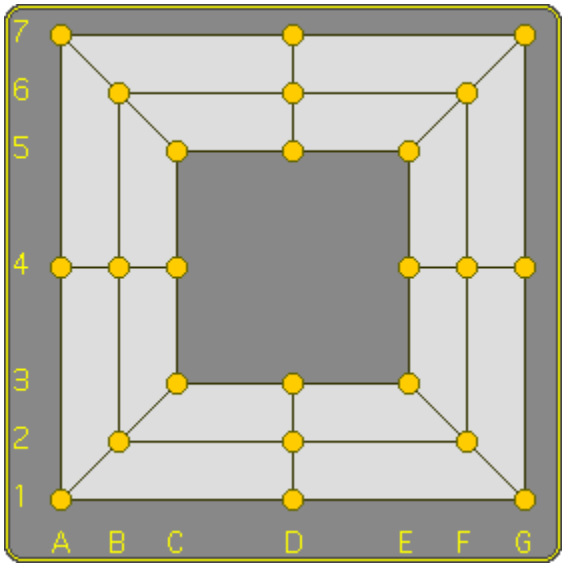

Figure 2.3: An image of the boardgame *Morabaraba*. Adapted from: Mindsports https://www.mindsports.nl/index.php/side-dishes/interesting-games?start=16

Task

In a discussion forum on myUnisa with your e-tutor, discuss cultural riddles and indigenous games which can be found in your culture, and explain how they link to a person's development.

NB: Please note that it is compulsory for you to participate in these discussions.

Summary

A comprehensive understanding of the factors that have an impact on the major aspects of child development, requires an awareness of the relevant cultural contexts. This understanding begins with institutions of education promoting the values and practices embedded in the African cultural heritage. The environments in which children in Africa develop should expose them to the strengths and values of the continent. In this learning unit, we discussed different perspectives on the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of child development. We also discussed different biological, social, and cognitive theories of child development, and the cultural aspects underlying childhood. The unit closed by providing a discussion on child development from different cultural perspectives, with specific reference to African cultural childrearing and development practices.

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