

## **EN\_49142959 Criticism of A Theory**

As a first year student I do not fully feel entitled to critique what we are learning, since I do not have a great deal of knowledge yet. Most theories in the book or lectures are either backed up by multiple studies and well accepted in psychology or if there is little empirical support, it is mentioned or explained. Therefore, all I can criticize or declare as not convincing is not based on my own critical thinking, but what I read in the book.

One of those theories is the theory of human development by Erik Erikson. According to chapter 9, it proposes the idea that every person goes through eight stages in their life. Each stage has one main challenge with a developmental goal, for example the stage of 'identity versus role confusion' with the goal to explore social roles and to develop an identity. According to Erikson, if a challenge is not completed and no progress is made, further development might be reduced. Additionally, the stages have a fixed order and range from infancy to old age. Studies in the field of developmental psychology, however, emphasize that human development is more variable, and that people might resolve these challenges in a different order or multiple times (Chandler, 1994). Furthermore, the theory uses vague wording and very broad developmental challenges. This ambiguity could lead to difficulties in defining and measuring these terms in a research setting. This might also be the reason for lack of empirical support. The theory is descriptive, yet not testable. Moreover, the psychosocial challenges of the theory are supposedly 'culture-neutral'. The model consists of stages which might be perceived and valued differently in non-western cultures. For example, the fifth stage 'Identity versus role confusion' mainly focuses on individualism and one's personal identity. This aligns with western ideas. Other cultures, however, often emphasize community and the responsibility for one's family. Hence, Erikson's model cannot be applied to every culture, because some stages might not be relevant to development in one culture, yet important in another. In addition, the theory expects everyone to experience comparable challenges in each stage. Even in western cultures, people experience the world and their developmental challenges differently. They are based on and shaped by environmental factors, such as

socioeconomic status, level of education or other life experiences. Erikson's model does not account for them.

Overall, Erikson's theory of human development has several flaws. It does not consider cultural or environmental factors and simply assumes everyone passes the same challenges at the same stages. Additionally, the terms are vague, and some concepts involved in the challenges are not testable. The theory lacks empirical evidence and is merely descriptive. However, while it does not capture the complexity of human development, it provides insights into development over lifespan. It has been a starting point for researchers and still encourages them to consider what possible psychosocial challenges are associated with certain ages over the course of one's life.