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Analysis of child development based on development psychological theory

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ABSTRACT

Children are unique humans and experience varied development even though they are of the same gene or the same sex but grow and develop according to their respective characteristics. Of course, this condition also demands adjustments in providing appropriate and varied stimuli and responses. This study aims to observe the growth and development of children to explore the growth and development of children and see the reactions generated by children if given a specific stimulus. This research method uses longitudinal case studies. The respondents of this study were three children. The study found that children's cognitive, psychosocial and moral development can be developed by conditioning the child and the child's environment. Children's health and a conducive environment play an essential role in determining children's growth and development. Maternal health and parental cooperation also determine the growth and development of the child.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Child development is a journey full of mystery and uniqueness. How children develop their identity, skills, personality, and knowledge over time has been the subject of in-depth study in the world of developmental psychology [1]–[3]. Understanding child development through analysis of developmental psychology theories provides in-depth insight into how classical views and modern approaches shape our understanding of critical phases in a child's life. Developmental psychology theories such as Freud, Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg will be the main focus point in this analysis. Sigmund Freud, with psychosexual theory in shaping a person's personality. With his cognitive theory, Jean Piaget explored how children understand the world around them. Erik Erikson discusses the concepts of identity and social development. Meanwhile, Lawrence Kohlberg focused his research on moral development [4]. Each theory has its own explicit analytical focus. Understanding each theory will help us see how children pass through the stages of development. When explaining about children, the question that arises is not only how children develop but also what is very important is how children complete developmental tasks well and can get through times of crisis optimally [5]; what is a good process for accompanying children's development, how to respond to children at their developmental stages [6].

This article will also analyse essential concepts, such as moral, emotional, and cognitive development. How children understand moral values, manage emotions, and develop cognitively will be the

focal point of analysis, thereby increasing our understanding of essential aspects of children's development. The involvement of technology in children's daily lives will also be a point that cannot be ignored. How interactions with digital devices affect children's cognitive and social development [7], [8]. Then, in research studies that cannot be separated from looking at child development, it has been explained that cognitive and psychosocial development is influenced by brain development and the nerves in the body [9]. For example, the brain will receive information, process the data and provide instructions to respond. Apart from that, the role of parents or child caregivers in children's development is also an important aspect that will be explored in this article. Children have their own physical development, unique personalities, talents and interests; this diversity condition can help design parenting or mentoring approaches that are more adaptive and inclusive of children [10], [11]. By seeing children as unique individuals influenced by various factors, we can build a stronger foundation for creating an environment that supports or facilitates their optimal holistic development.

It is also essential to consider the child's development as a whole (physical, mental, and environmental). This means that a child's development at one stage can form the basis for or influence the next stage of development [12]. Analysis of these theories seeks to explore the transition from one phase to another. Many studies also link how important a child's brain development is to success in various cognitive, psychosocial and moral aspects of children [13]–[16]. Then, exploring aspects of continuity in child development can provide valuable insight for parents, educators and psychologists in developing integrated approach strategies. The analysis of this study explores all dimensions. It invites readers to reflect on how developmental psychology theories in childhood can be integrated into daily practice, both in the context of formal education and informal care [17]. The main aim of this study is to provide a solid foundation for parents, caregivers, educators, or adults to help children grow and develop optimally, preparing them to face the complexity of an ever-changing world. This study aims to provide insight into the role of family, school and community in supporting children's development. The extent to which upbringing and environment play a role in shaping children's cognitive, psychosocial and moral aspects. Then, how to provide good care and create an environment that supports positive and healthy development for children in this modern era.

2. METHOD

The research methodology uses a longitudinal case study. This longitudinal case study approach provides researchers with the opportunity to observe changes in respondents over a long research period and in the broader context. The respondents were three children: one girl and two boys. The first child was a girl born in April 2020, the second child was a boy born in May 2021, and the third child was a boy born in June 2022. This research was carried out over three years and eight months (April 2020 to December 2023). Frequent data collection throughout the study period to monitor children's development, understand changes, and identify influencing factors. Data analysis will be carried out continuously during the research to identify findings during the respondent's observation period. The data analysis stages use three stages: i) reducing data, ii) presenting data, and iii) drawing conclusions [18].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Children's cognitive development

The study found that children who received sufficient breast milk and reached two years of age had optimal cognitive development compared to children who received breast milk for a short time or less than one year. Of course, this cognitive development will impact children's responses to information, attitudes and behaviour. The results of this study found that children who received breast milk for longer showed low levels of aggressiveness, high self-control and quickly understood the language stimuli presented (at the age of 1.5 years, psychosocial and moral aspects could already be developed because they were able to understand the stimuli presented). Then, children who receive breast milk for a short time tend to have highly aggressive behaviour and low self-control. Even though formula milk is given, it does not contribute to reducing aggressiveness and increasing self-control. The results of this study found that when a mother is pregnant, her child automatically no longer wants to breastfeed even though the mother's breast milk is still there. The scientific field of health or medicine may explain this. Therefore, mothers need to maintain their health and space their pregnancies. Maintaining pregnancy spacing aims to provide sufficient breast milk for children up to two years. Then, mothers need to maintain their health and the food they consume to produce adequate and nutritious breast milk for their children. Parents should pay attention to their health and the food they consume during pregnancy because the initial development of a child's brain begins in the womb.

This study found that boys' cognitive development is slower than girls', or it could also be said that women's sensitivity instincts develop more quickly than men's. Six-month-old girls already have a sensitivity

or understanding of the language being spoken; of course, this is instinctive because this is also supported by the fact that girls have faster development than boys. For example, if we invite girls to a discussion by saying, "son, don't cry; mother is resting or sick," they respond by not crying or reducing the sound of crying. But boys are difficult to talk to; they keep calling until they get what they want. Judging from gender, children's character has been developed since birth; for example, girls are easily sensitive to emotions and have sensitive feelings, meaning that their affectionate attitudes have been developed since birth so that they can understand or respond to their parents' language when they are 6 months old, have fussy nature, likes to cry and asks for parental warmth during infancy, meaning likes to ask to be held or for more attention. Boys have very high egos, and their leadership skills are already developed, such as not wanting to be controlled, liking to impose their will, not fussy, and rarely crying during infancy. This means that since they were babies, their respective natures have developed according to their gender, so it is the parent's duty to maintain and grow that potential to develop properly and correctly. This means that if they produce according to their respective natures, this will minimise the occurrence of conflict at the developmental stage until adulthood.

3.2. Psychosocial development of children

3.2.1. Psychosocial formation due to the environmental conditions of younger siblings who have older siblings with an age difference of 1 year

The younger sibling is growing towards the age of 1 year, and the older sibling is increasing towards the age of 2 years. The second child, who is one year apart from the first child (his older sibling), is more susceptible to having a tough character due to the influence of interactions with his older sibling, who does not want to share with his younger sibling and takes objects that belong to his younger sibling by force. Therefore, strict parental assistance and control are needed so that when an older sibling wants to act aggressively, the parents are immediately present to control the older sibling's desire to be bold and correctly train them to get what they want. Children usually act with their limited ego and cognitive abilities, giving rise to spontaneous behaviour. The weakness of parents is that they are not always able to control and be near their children because they also have to carry out other duties as wives and husbands. To improve the adverse treatment a younger sibling receives from their older sibling, parents can give sufficient attention to the second child, ask the first child to show what the more youthful sibling asks for or divert the younger sibling's attention to things he or she enjoys so that the younger sibling is immediately happy again.

3.2.2. Psychosocial formation exercises of the child

To improve the psychosocial behaviour of an older sibling towards their younger sibling, parents can ask the older sibling to give what the more youthful sibling asks for and say, "don't you feel sorry for seeing your younger sibling cry?" This condition will build good social interactions with his younger sibling and feel his younger sibling's sadness. The realisation of children having good social interactions according to what parents want, if parents are correct in training or providing stimulus to children when they seize objects held by their younger siblings. Example of stimulus: siblings are invited to talk by saying, "give that toy to little sis. Isn't it sad for you to see your little sister crying?" this aims to build positive emotions in the child by showing his little brother crying due to his attitude and behaviour. With this stimulus, it is hoped that older siblings will feel their younger sibling's sadness and voluntarily give their more youthful siblings toys. However, suppose parents scold or forcefully take objects that older siblings have snatched from their younger siblings. In that case, parents are indirectly training their children to be aggressive, and that will become a model for older siblings in responding to problems.

3.2.3. Psychosocial formation of the third child with an age difference of 1 year from the second child

The psychosocial formation of the third child is better than that of the second child. The third child will have a more balanced environment than the second child. This balance is achieved because the third child has an older sibling who is already three years old and has had optimal cognitive development so that he can love his younger sibling. The existence of the first child (first sibling) will make the third child receive enough love, even though he sometimes feels negative attitudes from the second child (second sibling). The presence of the first child will be a balance between the younger siblings because older siblings always play with their younger siblings. Of course, the first child must be well-formed to have the right attitude in responding to his younger siblings.

3.2.4. The role of parents in the psychosocial formation of children

A description of the condition of children born close to one year apart in age needs close support and mentoring because if they are allowed to interact without conditioning from parents, the children's character will be formed in an unhealthy way because they interact with each other with their own egos, does not have the correct example in responding to his younger sibling or older sibling. For example, when a child has a dispute over an object, we have to understand which child we can discuss with, so we focus the

discussion on that child so that the child is willing to give in and then give a reward if he wants to give in. When the child has no one to discuss with, we choose to be a little firm with the older child because his cognitive development is more developed than that of his younger sibling. When he can do what we want, then reward him or give him more attention to cover up his sadness. If there is a dispute between boys and girls, girls will be easier to compromise than boys. Then, for example, if a child hits a younger sibling or a younger sibling hits an older sibling, then immediately train the child in the correct attitude and behaviour by taking the child's hand and then saying, "love little sibling, the younger sibling is crying, while stroking your older sibling's hand on their younger sibling's cheek or their younger sibling's head and train them to hug their younger sibling." By practising like that, we train the behaviour that should be done to younger siblings and teach older siblings to have empathy when they see their more youthful siblings crying. Children have been taught that when an older sibling snatches an object held by their younger sibling and the younger sibling cries when parents say, the younger sibling is crying, the older sibling will immediately return the object that was snatched from their younger sibling.

If a parent accidentally scolds a child, then correct the condition as soon as possible, for example, by hugging the child, rubbing his head or apologising to the child. This means that we, as parents, are not allowed to be angry with our children. Parents are allowed to be firm with their children. The difference between anger and a healthy attitude is: i) anger will give rise to attitudes and behaviour that will not be controlled and will be prone to causing excessive physical and psychological harm to the child and will leave the child in sadness and without educational value, and ii) an assertive attitude is a condition that is conditioned to stimulate the child to the desired condition, controlled attitudes and behaviour and consciously and has a goal that is expected to do this so that if the desired condition is achieved, the child is given a reward such as giving a gift or giving more affection at that time such as giving "hugs and kisses" and positive words such as "father's son is smart and good".

The conditions seen and felt by the child will become a model for the child and shape the child's character. Therefore, it creates favourable conditions and helps children obtain a positive environment because they adopt directly what they see and feel. Hence, parents are responsible for facilitating a healthy environment for children. How can we blame individuals who don't understand anything and are unable to think abstractly parents must be able to evaluate "why is my child like this?" and “what should I do to improve my child?”. If you want to have children close together, what is suitable for the mother's health and the child's development is two years apart. Because children are two years old, their cognitive development has developed enough to be invited to discuss or compromise to interact positively with their younger siblings. Having children one year apart will require more attention and close assistance and drain quite a lot of energy from parents so that the child can grow and develop well in terms of cognitive, psychosocial and moral aspects. Of the child, so in this condition, the cooperation of both parents is essential. If parents do not support each other in caring for or educating children, it is feared that the children will have tough characters and the mother's stress level will increase.

Good child development can be realised if there is cooperation from parents. Parents, as humans, must also feel tired from activities, so parents must complement each other so that the feeling of tiredness does not affect the child. Husbands must help their wives with their work when they have free time and vice versa. Then parents should not conflict with each other in their behaviour towards their children; for example, when a father is strict with his child, he must support the father's attitude, not defend the child who has made a mistake. Parents must have the same perceptions, attitudes and behaviour in caring for and educating children.

3.3. Children's moral development

Children's morals can be formed by environmental conditioning, but good cognitive development is also needed to process the stimuli given. This study has taught us that if a child asks for something, we say wait a moment; this conditioning means that not everything that is asked for will always be available or obtained immediately; sometimes, we must be patient to get something. In this case, children are trained to be patient. Benefits for parents: sometimes parents need time to realise or grant their child's wishes, so, with habits that have been introduced, when the child asks for something, and the parents are busy doing something, the parents can say, "wait a moment, child". Under the conditions that have been trained, the child will answer, "yes, mother". But suppose we do not condition training like that. When one day the parents cannot immediately fulfil the child's wishes, the child will respond by crying, screaming and being hysterical until his wishes are realised.

This condition is challenging to train in boys because boys have higher egos than girls. One of these causes is also influenced by the cognitive development of boys, which develops more slowly than girls. For treatment or behavioural conditioning requiring understanding or parents can invite discussion, boys are 2.5 years and over. Boys under 2.5 years old can be challenging to discuss with or complex to the condition due to their high egos and slow-developing cognition.

If boys don't get what they want, they will respond by crying, screaming and being hysterical until they get what they want. With these conditions, parents need to be sensitive to the environment around their children. For example, if there are dangerous objects that attract the child's attention, then remove these objects from the child as soon as possible. If parents are strict, don't let anyone else laugh because the child's cognitive will, of course, process it; if my parents are like that, then just laugh at it so the phenomenon shows the condition that when parents reprimand or act sternly towards their children, their children think it is a joke. Then children should not be invited to joke too much because when we are firm, children don't care. The child phase is where everything seen and felt is severe, which is the condition. Therefore, it is necessary to build favourable conditions in the family environment to develop children's cognitive, psychosocial and moral qualities. This exercise needs to be practised continuously until the child gets used to it and controls his attitudes and behaviour, even though this process still predominantly uses instinct.

3.4. The process of cognitive, psychosocial and moral formation of the child

This study emphasises the need for consistency and continuity in early childhood care and education, both in terms of child development over time and within the framework of the childcare and education system. This study shows that it is essential to pay attention to maternal health and food consumption to produce good brain development during pregnancy. Brain development will contribute to children's cognitive development. Cognitive development contributes to children's psychosocial and moral development. The process flow to realise children's cognitive, psychosocial and moral development develops optimally, as shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 explains that support from a husband or surrounding family is needed to support pregnant women so that pregnant women are physically and psychologically healthy. The mother's physical and mental health will contribute to smooth breastfeeding and the mother's love for her child. Children who receive sufficient breast milk and love from their mothers will have their biological and psychological needs met. These favourable conditions will contribute to the development of the child's brain. A brain that develops optimally will influence children's cognitive abilities. Optimal cognitive development will enable the child to receive and process information well, so conditioning the child and the environment will be easy for the child. The conditioning of children and the environment carried out by parents or caregivers will be easily understood and absorbed by children, thereby contributing to the child's psychosocial and moral aspects.

The family is a natural place and starting place for children's growth and development [19]. When they are children, they spend a lot of time with their family, see a lot of attitudes and behaviour in the family, get a lot of responses from the family, and interact a lot with the family. Therefore, it is the family environment or surrounding environment that shapes the child's attitudes, behaviour and morals. Thus, the formation of a child's character is formed from absorbing the values in their living environment. Therefore, parents must understand this and provide a healthy environment for children to grow and develop or modify the surrounding environment to shape the child's character into a good one. For example, always smile at children and exemplify good attitudes in front of children; if there are relatives or older siblings who like to make jokes to children, don't let them make jokes that make children whine, sad or cry because this will train them to like it. Whine, be sad or cry later. Of course, things like that need to be paid attention to because childhood is a critical period, and children don't have the cognitive ability to differentiate between a joke and a serious one. Everything they see and all the stimuli they receive will become the child's character in the next development phase.

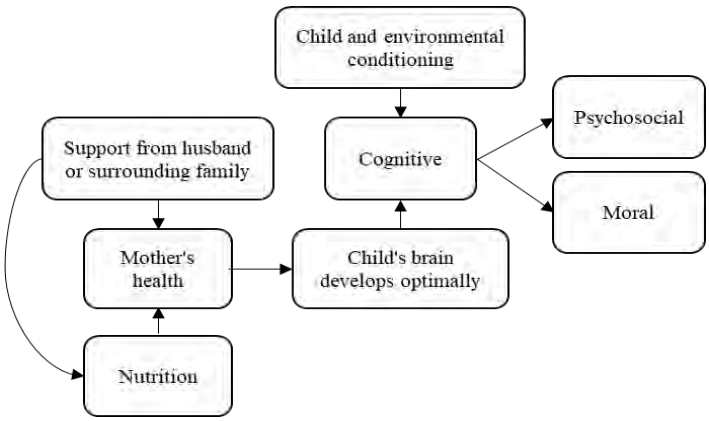

Figure 1. Flow of the cognitive, psychosocial and moral formation process of children

The findings of this research explain that the involvement of developmental psychology theories in educational approaches not only provides an in-depth view of the child's development process but also opens up opportunities to increase learning effectiveness. The integration of Piaget's theory shows that teaching that considers children's cognitive development stages can improve their abilities to understand concepts and reasoning. According to Erikson's theory, support provided according to the stages of social and emotional identity forms a solid basis for helping children manage emotions and create positive social relationships. Research shows that maintaining a baby's development can begin during pregnancy. Research results found that parents who have unhealthy lifestyles and often consume foods that contain lots of chemicals will hurt fetal development and, at birth, will result in impaired cognitive and behavioural development [20], [21].

Cognitive development is related to brain development. Brain development begins in the womb [22]–[24]. Research findings show that brain development has the function of processing emotional and social information, such as providing meaning when receiving social stimulation and understanding emotions and desires. Engaging in social interactions [25], [26]. Research findings explain that each child has their own character in responding to the stimuli they see and feel [27]. In this study, the research sample was three children from the same parents: one girl and two boys, all three of whom had their own characteristics when given the same intervention. Two boys of the same gender also have their own characteristics in responding to the intervention given. These conditions are caused by various factors, such as the child's level of cognitive development, the child's health, the care received by the child, the child's environment and so on. A mother's knowledge about child development greatly determines child development [28].

Then, it is essential to pay attention to children's health from an early age because it will impact the child's mental development. Research findings explain that during childhood, nerves are more vulnerable and easily damaged by toxic chemicals than adults [29]. Thus, parents need to provide nutritious food and avoid instant foods, which, of course, contain many chemical ingredients that will impact the child's physical development. Then, children who have depressed parents, are economically tricky, are often neglected or abused, witness constant conflict, are in an orphanage or experience other chronic stress, which will result in children's neurocognitive and mental disorders [30]–[33]. Other research finds that a problematic environment inhibits children's development [34]. Unhealthy conditions received by children not only hurt biological development but can also reduce the body's immunity, disrupt the development of autonomic reactivity so that they are easily stressed or depressed, and experience disorders of thinking, learning and memory [35], [36].

4. CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the application of developmental psychology theories can provide insight and knowledge of children's development and can be used as a guide in providing child care. Integrating these theories into educational approaches significantly positively impacts various aspects of development, from cognitive abilities to social and emotional identity and moral children. The child's mental, psychosocial and moral development can be developed by conditioning the child and his environment. Children's health and environment need to be a significant concern because they can affect children's biological growth; biological growth disorders will result in psychological disorders, memory, thinking, learning and other soft skill mastery. Then, the growth and development of children begin from the womb, so parents can provide suitable stimuli to realise optimal growth and development of children. Basic service programs or family counselling can be delivered to increase parents' insight and knowledge in caring for children and increase cooperation between both parents in caring for children.

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