

## Study of Erikson's stages of psychosocial development theory

Dr. Anill Kumar Taneja, Assistant Professor, Shri Ganesh College Of Education,  
Bali Brahmanan, Gohana

**Introduction** : Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development emphasizes the sociocultural determinants of development and presents them as eight stages of psychosocial conflicts (often known as Erikson's psychosocial stages) that all individuals must overcome or resolve successfully in order to adjust well to the environment.

According to Erikson's theory, we all encounter a certain crisis that contributes to our psychosocial growth at each of the eight stages of psychosocial development. Whenever we experience such crisis, we are left with no choice but to face it and think of ways to resolve it. Failure to overcome such crisis may lead to significant impact on our psychosocial development.

### Stage One – Trust versus Mistrust

Infants must learn how to trust others, particularly those who care for their basic needs. They should feel that they are being cared for and that all their needs are met.

Small babies are new to this world and may view the outside world as threatening. Depending on how they are treated by people around them, the sense of threat can be replaced by trust. When this happens, they gain a sense of security and begin to learn to trust people around them.

ISSN : 2278-6848



© International Journal for  
Research Publication and Seminar

### Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Approximate Age	Psycho Social Crisis
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs. Guilt
5 - 13 years	Industry vs. Inferiority
13 - 21 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion
21 - 39 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation
65 and older	Ego Integrity vs. Despair



The first and most important person to teach an infant about trust is usually the parents. Parents are expected to take good care of their children and attend to their needs. For example, the parents of a baby provide him with food, shelter, sustenance and make him feel very comfortable and secure.

### **Stage Two – Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt**

At stage two, children should be taught the basic ways of taking care of themselves, including changing their clothes and feeding themselves. If a child can't take care of his own basic needs and continue to rely on others to take care of him, he may feel shameful when he sees that other kids of his own age are able to perform tasks such as feeding themselves.

### **Stage Three – Initiative versus Guilt**

As children continue to grow up, they like to explore and do things on their own. They can learn new concepts introduced in school and are expected to practice these lessons in real life. They know that they can accomplish these tasks on their own, but if they fail to do so and end up asking for assistance from others, they may feel a sense of guilt.

### **Stage Four – Industry versus Inferiority**

At Erikson's psychosocial stage four, children mature and their level of self-awareness increases. They understand logical reasoning, scientific facts, and other matters that are typically taught in school.

Children also become more competitive. They want to do things that other children of the same age can do. When they make the effort to perform a task and succeed, they develop self-confidence. However, if they fail, they tend to feel that they are inferior to others.

### **Stage Five – Identity versus Role Confusion**

During adolescence, young people are expected to develop their sexual identity. This is gained through the discovery of oneself and in the course of finding meaning to their personhood. They may also experience identity crisis as a result of the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Some adolescents may feel confused and are unsure whether an activity is age-appropriate for them. Crisis at this stage may also be brought about by expectations from themselves and from people around them, e.g. their parents.

### **Stage Six – Intimacy versus Isolation**

This stage is very apparent for young adults who are in their 30s. People at this stage become worried about finding the right partner and fear that if they fail to do so, they may have to spend the rest of their lives alone.

Young adults are most vulnerable to feel intimacy and loneliness because they interact with a lot of people in this phase of their lives. It's not always a success story for every young adult to find someone with whom they can share a lifelong commitment. Some may choose to spend the rest of their lives as singles.

### **Stage Seven – Generativity versus Stagnation**

Adults who are in their 40s and 50s tend to find meaning in their work. They feel like at this point in their lives, they should be able to contribute something meaningful to the society and leave a legacy. If they fail to achieve this, they feel like they have been an unproductive member of the society.

### **Stage Eight – Ego Integrity versus Despair**

People who are in their 60s or older are typically retirees. It is important for them to feel a sense of fulfillment knowing that they have done something significant during their younger years. When they look back in their life, they feel content, as they believe that they have lived their life to the fullest. If they feel that they haven't done much during their life, it's likely that they will experience a sense of despair.

### **References :**

1. <https://www.psychologynotesHQ.com/erikerikson/>
2. <http://study.com/academy/lesson/erik-eriksons-eight-stages-of-psycho-social-development-conflicts-growth.html>
3. [http://www.businessballs.com/erik\\_erikson\\_psychosocial\\_theory.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/erik_erikson_psychosocial_theory.htm)
4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erikson%27s\\_stages\\_of\\_psychosocial\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erikson%27s_stages_of_psychosocial_development)