

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE IN RELATION TO MEDIA EFFECT

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ABSTRACT

This paper is disclosing the influence of human development towards media effect. Media effect is found varies towards different stages of human beings. Human beings learn differently from media that they are exposed to. This is because human beings have their mental development in stages and thus they conceptualize different ideas at different stages.

Keywords: Developmental perspective, Media effect

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about social learning and violence in relation to media effect , there is another factor that researcher must take into consideration. The factor is the developmental perspective . There is no doubt that humans learn from observation but there has been some questions, how much and what kinds of behaviour people learn from media?

What does it mean by developmental perspective in this context ?

One aspect of people's power to deal with television is their ability to comprehend it at different stages in their intellectual development . Logically, older children will 'read' television differently from younger children .

As Ellen Wartella wrote,

“this ‘developmental perspective’ seeks to describe and explain the nature of the communicative difference between four year olds , six year olds , ten year olds , etc , and adults”

(Baran 1995 : 205)

This notion of developmental stages in children's communicative abilities was drawn from developmental psychology ,especially the work of Jean Piaget ,who argued that children , as they move from infancy through adolescence , undergo qualitative changes

in the level of cognitive and intellectual abilities available to them. Although it might be easy to assume that older children's processing of television messages is more developed and therefore, somehow better insulating them from television effects, this was neither the conclusion of developmental research, nor was its goal.

Wartella said,

“ While question of children's modeling of televised behaviour has been the major focus of experimental and survey research” the development perspective asks ” new questions and (deals with) different sorts of communication issues regarding children's learning from television and use of television”

(Barant 1995 : 206)

Much of this research actually focused on differences in attention and comprehension at different stages of development to better tailor educational programming to specific groups of children.

Developmental psychology is concerned with describing and explaining the development of people from birth to old age . Within this area there is a vast body of literature on child development (Mark Fox : 47).Psychologists have offered a variety of alternative theories to explain how development occurs . This range from Piaget's theory of the structure of mind changing , thorough Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality development , to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory.

Piaget focused the way pupil's cognitive structures develop through their interaction with environment. He described his work as 'genetic epistemology' – a developmental theory about the way knowledge develops. According to Piaget , pupil's mind adapts to the environment through two key mechanisms : assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is concerned with the pupil's adapting and modifying information from the environment to fit with his cognitive structures ; accommodation , on the other hand , consists of pupils adapting and more modifying structures to fit the new information.

Stage of Development

Cognitive development is a series of stages that are linked to the pupil's biological development . As each stage unfolds , the pupil is able to understand a more complex view of the world . There are essentially four stages , named after the dominant cognitive structure of each :

i. Sensori-motor (age 0-2)

Children at this age structure the world through their senses and actions . Children gradually develop internal representation of well defined sequences of physical or mental activity , such as grasping , sucking and looking at mental activity, such as grasping ,sucking and looking at objects . This presentation , similar to schemata – develops during the first few years of the child’s life . The child begins to learn how to be able to represent actions and objects internally.

A good example of one of these representations is object permanence . The child at the sensory – motor level does not know that objects exist as separate entities. It is only when children are about two years old that they realize that an object has been an existence independent of their perception of it .This is the development through children representing an object in their mind by overtly imitating it through their actions . Gradually children stop overtly imitating the object and simply have image of it in their minds – the actions becomes internalized . This thought , or image, is very limited and develops before the child has any language.

ii. Pre-Operation (2-7)

At the next pre-operation stage children’s thoughts become more flexible . They can remember , imagine and pretend (Mark Fox : 54) . Piaget differentiates between two subphases :

- a. Preconceptual phase(age 2-4)
 - when language develops
- b. Intuitive phase (age 4-7)
 - development of mental operation such as being able to think in terms of relationships and classes.

The term operation is used by Piaget to describe an internalized action ; that is an action that takes place in the imagination The characteristic of this stage , and the reason that it is called pre-operation , is that the pupil performs these mental operations as isolated events rather than relating them to a system of possible operation . A good example of this is that the pre-operational child cannot think in terms of reversibility ; so although five year-olds can understand that if ice is heated it turns to water , they do not easily (or automatically) see this process can be reversed. Their lack of flexibility means that their logical thinking is limited . The pre-operation child finds it difficult to change viewpoints . He sees the world from his own position and finds it difficult to shift perspectives.

iii. Concrete operational (7-11)

During this stage, children begin to realize that operation can reverse . The importance of this realization is that it is the basis of logic . However they are still only functioning at the concrete level which they can perform mental operations with concrete materials but not with abstract possibilities .

iv. Formal Operation (11 +)

At this stage children are mentally able to solve abstract problems . They are able to think through the problem and possible solution for it , and to test out a number of hypotheses before finding a logical solution to a problem.

Examples

1. Children at the age 3 – 5 year olds are more interested in watching cartoons movies as compared to 6 – 9 year olds who are more interested in watching adult programmers (Mohd Md Yusoff 1993:12)
2. Children at the age below 6 year olds get more frightened watching fantasy movies as compared to older children. (Mohd Md Yusoff 1993 : 41)

CONCLUSION

Therefore based on the children's intellectual development, we can conclude that human beings learn differently from the media that they are exposed to . This is because human being have their mental development in stages and thus they conceptualize different ideas at different stages.

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