Robert Havighurst Developmental Task Theory and the Need for Developmental Guidance

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Abstract
This paper shows how the psychosocial developmental task theory of Robert Havighurst necessitates the need for Developmental Guidance. Development is a gradual process and all humans must go through different stages as they head towards maturity. At each stage, they must encounter task which, if not overcome, will hinder their progress to the next stage of life. This paper therefore, relying on the tenets of Robert Havighurst theory, stresses the need for proper guidance and counselling to be given to individuals at all stages of development of their lives in order to help them develop properly as well as forestall regrets in old age.
Keywords: developmental, guidance, infancy, adolescence, maturity

Introduction
Developmental guidance has been defined severally by different researchers based on their angle of approach. For instance, Lawani and Afujo (2011) opined that developmental guidance is the organized effort of the school to personalize and humanize the educational process for all school children. Developmental guidance, according to Eboh (2019), is defined as the help given to maturing children to enable them grow properly and develop positive behaviour. Developmental guidance is a stage by stage guidance given to a child to enable him/her acquire their developmental tasks. These are demands put on individuals at each stage of development in order to promote satisfaction at the next stage. Developmental guidance studies each child as an entity over a period of time, so as to understand his/her unique potentials and limitations. Developmental guidance is not an incidental activity; instead, it is one which is scheduled, planned for and constantly evaluated (Lawani & Afujo, 2011).

Myrick (2011) was of the opinion that developmental guidance assumes that human nature moves individually, sequentially and positively towards self-enhancement. It recognizes that there is a force within each individual that makes him believe they are special and there is no one like them. The process involves a cooperative effort on the part of all school personnel to assist the child to understand himself and others; his opportunities and his responsibilities, to the end that he might become purposeful in his approach to educational experience and life. And as Waring (2014) stated, children today face a great number of stressors

According to Ipaye (1992) in Eboh (2019), the following are some of the needs for the formulation of developmental guidance:

1. The need to understand oneself.
2. Need to develop personal potentials.
3. Need for self-appraisal.
4. Orientation towards present and future occurrences.
5. Need for self-adjustment, as well as adjustment towards environmental demands and reality.

Developmental theory

A developmental theory presents a systematic way of thinking how human beings grow from babies to adolescents to adults to elderly people, and the various changes they undergo as they make this passage (Shute & Slee, 2015). Also, Cherry (2020) pointed out that developmental theories provide a framework for thinking about human growth, development and learning. They provide a set of guiding principles and concepts that describe and explain human development. Hayslip et al. (2006) stated that developmental theories are theories that divide child development into distinct stages which are characterized by qualitative differences in behaviour. Myrick (2011) noted that development is a term that is commonly used when talking about orderly changes or changes that appear to have some kind of direction. Of course, this order and direction can be disrupted if certain factors are introduced that thwart natural inclinations. In addition, the nature of social institutions and cultural dimensions influence life's process and stages.

Havighurst theory and developmental guidance

Robert James Havighurst, between 1948 and 1953, developed a highly influential theory of human development that focused on developmental tasks. The concept of developmental tasks describes development as a lifelong process. A developmental task arises at or about a certain period in the life of an individual, successful achievement of which leads to one's happiness and to success with later tasks; while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval of society, and difficulty with later tasks (Havighurst, 1972). This theory is an elaboration of the Erik Erickson's psycho-social theory of personality development. Seiffge-Krenke and Gelhaar (2008) explained that Havighurst's concept is unique in the sense that it fuses challenges from different domains, stresses the individual's activity in harmonizing these demands and links the developmental tasks of different life phases.

The developmental stages according to Havighurst (1972) are:
1. Infancy/early childhood (0-5)
2. Middle childhood (6-11)
3. Adolescence (12-18)
4. Early adulthood (19-30)
5. Middle age (31-59)
6. Later maturity (over 60)

From the above, Havighurst was able to recognize that every individual has three sources from which developmental tasks emanate. They are;
   a. Tasks that arise from physical maturation (walking, talking, bowel control, and so on).
   b. Tasks that arise from personal value (choice of occupation, philosophy of life, among others).

c. Tasks spearheaded by societal pressure (learning to read, being responsible, and so on). Tasks associated with each developmental stage are presented below:

1. Infancy/early childhood (Ages 0-5)

This stage spans between child birth and the age of five. This age bracket coincides with the pre-school age. This stage is very important in the development of a child. At this stage, the child is still at home and attached to the parents and other members of the family (Uzoeshi, 2002). The child needs to experience adequate care, protection and genuine affection from caregivers. It is a familiarity seeking stage with the social surroundings including everyday objects. Bogin (2012) explained that infancy is characterized by the most rapid velocity of growth of any of the post-natal stages. Shaw (2022) explained that babies grow and metamorphosed at an alarming rate, and every month brings new and exciting development. Havighurst (1972) listed some of the core developmental tasks at this stage of life to include: learning to walk; learning to take solid food; learning to talk; learning to control elimination of body waste; learning to read, relating emotionally to family members, and identifying relationships.

Guidance at this stage is provided by care-givers (parents, siblings, extended family members and teachers). They should guide the children to do what they are capable of doing at their own pace and in their own way but with judicious supervision from the caregiver. The child should also be allowed to engage in physical activities since that is the core activities they often align with at this age. Guidance techniques which could be adopted to enable infants achieve their developmental tasks, according to Uzoeshi (2002), include: play methods like songs and dances; television and film shows; use of recreational activities; and giving adequate attention to the children.

2. Middle Childhood (Ages 6-11)

Children between the ages of 6 and 12 are in the age period commonly referred to as middle childhood (Collins, 1984a). It is the developmental period between early childhood and adolescence, sometimes referred to as late childhood or early adolescence (Blume, 2014; Montemayor et al., 1990; Greenspan & Pollock, 1991). This stage coincides with the primary school age of children. It is characterized by the child's intellectual curiosity and performance. It is rich in potential for cognitive, social, emotional and physical advancements (Mah & Ford-Jones, 2012; Kamza, 2019). It embodies a number of distinctive and important transformations in human development (Collins, 1984b). They want to be recognized for producing things which give them a sense of industry. At this stage, the children need praises from others on the things they do. They need encouragement to do things and being praised for achieving results. If their efforts are unsuccessful, or if they are derided or treated as bothersome, inferiority complex results and this would have a lasting impact on their personality. Manning (2002) noted that this stage can be difficult for young adolescents as they face new and challenging developmental tasks.

Havighurst (1972) listed some of the developmental tasks at this stage to include: learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games, building wholesome attitudes toward oneself and a sense of self-concept, learning to get along with age mates, moving from the family circle to groups outside the home, learning the skills of tolerance and patience, learning appropriate

masculine or feminine social roles, achieving and developing fundamental skills in reading, writing, and calculating, achieving personal independence, among others.

Teachers and parents are the ones responsible for providing guidance for children at this stage. Teachers should develop the industrious tendency among the children while at school. They should be challenged with a variety of assignments and projects that are described in terms of specific objectives. On the other hand, while at home, parents should ascribe tasks to them based on masculine/feminine roles. This would help them identify their gender roles as well as develop a sense of responsibility. These tasks given must be commensurate with their level, to be undertaken at their own rate. Uzoeshi (2002) listed guidance techniques which could be adopted to achieve developmental tasks at this stage to include: individual and group counselling, film shows, use of psychological tests, consultation with parents/teachers, excursions, inculcating interpersonal relationships, autobiography, among others.

3. Adolescence (Ages 12-18)

Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood (WHO, 2023). This corresponds to the puberty and teenage period of life, as well as the junior and senior secondary school age grade (Uzoeshi, 2002; Stehlik, 2018). It is the most delicate stage and presents a variety of developmental tasks. It is characterized by children seeking for the attainment of independence and more concerned about what they would become in future. This is a period of intense biological, physical, emotional and intellectual transformation among adolescents. As Kumar (2009) pointed out, secondary school students face a lot of problems in their body as well as in mind, thus they need proper guidance and counselling to confront their own problems and overcome them satisfactorily.

Developmental tasks for this stage include: achieving new and more mature relationship with age mates of both sexes, learning socially approved feminine and masculine roles and behaviours, accepting one's physique and learning to use the body effectively, achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults, setting vocational goals for economic independence, selecting and preparing for an occupation, relating interests to abilities to choices, preparing for marriage and family life, setting realistic goals and making plans for reaching these goals, and so on (Havighurst, 1972).

Teachers, counsellors and parents are the main guidance providers at this stage of life. They should help the adolescents to integrate their roles in different situations, as well as develop their identity. They should encourage the children at this age to subordinate their childhood behaviour for a new kind of self-identity. The teachers should help and encourage them to make rational decisions backed up with commitment and immediacy. They should also be counselled on career options available in the labour market. Uzoeshi (2002) listed the guidance techniques which could be adopted at this stage to include: individual and group counselling; gathering and dissemination of information on vocational, educational and personal-social issues; provision of tutorial and remedial services; using guest speakers and films on different jobs; individual assessments with psychological tests; career day involving guest speakers; making educational tours to familiarize the students with the various educational institutions; and others.

4. Early Adulthood (Ages 19-30)

Individuals at this stage are referred to as young adults. This stage precedes adolescence period. Early adulthood is a period of rapid personal development when individuals experience major life transitions (Winpenny et al., 2020). It is characterized by continuous insistence on identity and eagerness to use it with others. The young adult seeks to be intimate with others in the same age group. If they achieve the goals of this stage, they fare successfully; but if otherwise they become isolated. This period in the life of an individual also tallies with Freudian Genital stage of psychosexual development. Developmental tasks at this stage include: selecting a mate and developing intimate relationships; learning to live with a marriage partner; starting a family; raising children; managing a home; getting started in an occupation, and sometimes neglecting other tasks during this period, and others (Havighurst, 1972).

Guidance is provided by parents, counsellors and teachers at this stage. Teachers have the duty of encouraging the students to accept their personal appearances. The worth of students should be recognized and their inconsistent behaviours tolerated and constructively refined. Parents and counsellors should encourage the young adult to establish respectful relationships with those around them. They should be encouraged to tolerate others and be committed to their job (Uzoeshi, 2002). Guidance techniques at this stage include: individual counselling on private issues; use of psychological tests; learning to write employment resume; visits to prospective employers; information on job openings and requirements; among others.

5. Middle Age (31-59)

Middle age is the bridge between youth and aging. This period of life is the largest vital part of adulthood due to increased life expectancy (Solhi et al., 2022). At this stage, the adult is expected to guide and mentor the upcoming generations. The adult is happy to give guidance and direction to the younger ones in the society. Inability to accomplish developmental tasks at this stage leads to stagnation and self-absorption. Those that have failed to accomplish their tasks can hardly remedy the loss, but have to reluctantly accept their fate. Havighurst (1972) listed developmental tasks to be accomplished to include: achieving adult's civic and social responsibility; establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living; assisting teenage children to become responsible happy adults; relating oneself to one's spouse as a person; accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle age; and adjusting to aging parents.

Counsellors are the main source of guidance at this stage. Uzoeshi (2002) noted that counsellors need to encourage the adult to join religious associations and community meetings where they can participate actively and give valuable advice to the younger generation. The counsellor should also advice the adult not to be idle, but to engage himself in activities that require human contact. Guidance techniques include: individual counselling; developing effective communication skills, among others.

6. Later Maturity (over 60 years)

Boyd (2021) described this stage as the time people adjust to life after work and begin to prepare themselves for death. This is the stage of self-actualization. If the adult fails to handle the challenges faced in life properly, it will lead to despair. Uzoeshi (2002) noted that at this period, the adult evaluates his failures and successes in life, and accepts his fate. Developmental tasks at this stage include: adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health; adjusting to

retirement and reduced income; adjusting to death of spouse; establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group; meeting social and civic obligations.

Gerontic counselling is needed at this period. The major task of the counsellor at this stage is to convince the adult to accept his/her experience as being worthwhile so as not to fall into despair. Finally, they should also implore the adult to draw close to God and accept his/her life as a fulfilled one.

Conclusion
Human development is complex. In summary, most theorists see it as a rather patterned, orderly, and distinct process. They agree that it is affected by cultural forces and events that take place in a person's life. Also, human development, while following some general expectations at certain stages of life, must take into account individual uniqueness. Effective developmental guidance and counselling programmes take stages of development into consideration. Participating in an effective guidance programme will enable individuals to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become productive and contributing members of the society.

Recommendations
It is therefore recommended that:
1. Adequate guidance services should be made available to everyone willing to make use of it.
2. Guidance counsellors should be well updated on the various developmental tasks associated with each developmental stage.
3. The teachings of Havighurst on developmental tasks should be made more popular through enlightenment programmes by educationists and stakeholders in the educational sector.
4. Adequate guidance services should be made available in schools and institutions of higher learning, as well as homes for the elderly and hospices.
5. Counsellors should be sensitive of the developmental stage of their respective clients in order to counsel and guide them properly.

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