

Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences: Theory and Applications

Professor Dilwar Hussain

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Week 10

Lecture 22: Personality development 1: Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Personality Development

I welcome you all to module 10 of this course. Module 10 is about personality development and change. This is the second lecture of this module, and overall, it is lecture number 22. Today's lecture is about personality development, basically the theories that talk about personality development. In this context, today's lecture will focus more specifically on Erikson's psychosocial stages of personality development.

We will mainly focus on this theory and discuss the different stages of personality development that this theory talks about. Before we talk about today's lecture, let me just give you a brief recap of the last lecture, which is lecture number 21. The last lecture was also part of this module, where we introduced the idea of personality development and change, the stability and the change of personality, and the evidence associated with that. We talked about the concept of stability of personality, that personality is a construct generally understood to be very stable traits. When we talk about personality dimensions, by definition, we assume that these are stable characteristics. So, we try to look at the evidence of stability of these personality traits, discuss to what extent they are stable, and then discuss the causes of this personality stability. Then we talked about the possible changes that take place in the personality traits or characteristics, and then discussed why sometimes personality traits change, the causes behind it.

So, these are some of the things that we discussed in the last lecture. We also discussed how, historically, certain personality traits have been changing. For example, if you compare today's generation with, let's say, a few generations back in the 1960s and 1970s, certain personality traits seem to be changing in a sense, like the score for neuroticism and even external locus of control are increasing in today's generation. It has also been found that gender differences are decreasing with time. So, historically, there have been some changes in the personality traits in the overall patterns of the population.

We also talked about how personality change could be self-initiated and the major obstacles in changing personality as it is not so easy to change personality. There are many obstacles,

and we discussed details about those factors. Today's lecture will specifically focus on one particular theory, which talks about different stages of development in terms of personality, that is Erikson's eight stages of life cycle.

So, in the last lecture, we already discussed the dynamics of change and stability. How changes in personalities can happen. What are the possibilities? And how do the personality characteristics stabilize? We focused on broad factors identified by trait psychologists. However, another psychologist, McAdams, was a critic of trait psychology. He suggests that traits alone might not fully capture personality change, continuity, and development.

Most of the theories that we talked about in the last lecture were from the perspective of trait theory or trait theories. Where we discussed how traits could change, and how traits remain stable. McAdams, who is a critic of trait psychology, suggests that traits alone are not enough to fully capture the dynamics of personality. That is, how personality changes, why it sometimes remains stable, and how personality develops as we proceed through the different stages of life cannot be completely explained by traits. McAdams introduced the concept of 'personal concerns', such as motives, values, strivings, developmental issues, and life tasks, which are more context-specific and tied to social roles or life stages.

McAdams proposed that personal concerns—the factors or the variables related to personal concerns, such as motivations, values, strivings, and many developmental issues related to life tasks. All these could also be tied to the concept of personality, which trait theory generally does not focus on. He proposed that while trait descriptions show stability, examining personal concerns could reveal more subtle personality changes. Traits may be more stable, but when we talk about these personal concerns—factors related to that—we could better understand the nuances of personality changes when we look into those factors.

Research on stability or change of personal concerns is limited. However, theorists have suggested that these concerns undergo distinct shifts throughout the lifespan. So, not much research is available in the context of the stability of personal concerns. But there are many theories that look at those shifts in personal concerns in the different stages of life.

Erikson's theory is one such theory by a prominent figure who proposed that personality development involves navigating eight distinct stages of life, each with defining themes or issues. He said that in human life, there are eight stages of personality changes or development where, in each of these stages, the concern is different, and one must navigate

the different challenges of life in these eight stages. So, according to Erikson, personality change is a fundamental aspect of life, continuing through adulthood and involving qualitative transformation as individuals move from one stage to another. So, Erikson says, as we move from one stage of life to another, personality development and transformations are a natural part of one's progression. Now, this perspective contrasts at the peripheral level with the trait concept of psychologists or personality, who often argue that personality stabilizes around a certain age, like age 30, offering a different view on personality development and change. Trait personality theory doesn't focus on specific transformations in certain stages of life. They focus more on the stability of certain traits and how they change in certain aspects, but mostly, the focus is on the stability aspect. So, in that sense, this theory talks about different perspectives than the trait perspective, which we will discuss at the end.

We will be looking at the broad theory and the stages of Erikson's psychosocial stages of personality development. Erikson was a disciple of Freud, whose theory we have already discussed in psychoanalysis.

Freud became widely known and attracted many geniuses from the field of psychology, many of whom became his disciples. Many of these disciples, who were stalwarts, eventually disagreed with Freud on many aspects of his theories and therefore separated from him. They gave their own theories with different modifications of psychoanalytical theory. Erik Erikson is one such person who was initially associated with Freud, a very close disciple of Freud, but he later separated and developed his own theory.

When we compare Erikson's theory and Freud's theory, there are certain differences because most of these people who separated from Freud developed very different theories. However, they also accepted some of the fundamental aspects of psychoanalysis.

How is Erikson's theory different from Freud's theory? So, Erikson emphasized that children are active, curious explorers who adapt to their environment, not passive beings shaped by biological urges and parents.

Freud's theory was mostly based on instincts, based on biological aspects and instincts, which guide behavior. If you look at Erikson's theory, he was focusing more on the active role of children in shaping their behavior, that children are active, curious explorers, and they adapt to different kinds of environments as per the requirement. They are not just passive beings shaped by biological drives and urges. In that sense, there is more focus on other aspects than biological instincts. Erikson was mostly labeled as an ego psychologist.

Who believed that at each life stage, people must cope with social realities to adapt successfully and develop normally. Thus, in Erikson's theory, the ego is more than just an arbiter between the id and superego.

Erikson's theory basically focuses more on how children, from the very beginning of their life, adapt to different social realities in society that shape their personality. So, he was more focused on social and cultural aspects, which Freud was not really giving much emphasis to.

So, in that sense, Erikson's theory is different from Freud's. Another critical difference is that Erikson placed less emphasis on sexual urges and more on cultural influences than Freud did. Most of the Neo-Freudians or disciples who separated from Freud disagreed with the overemphasis on sexual urges in terms of shaping personality.

Most of them disagreed on this particular aspect and focused on various other factors. Erikson here focused more on socio-cultural factors in terms of shaping personality. So, these are some basic differences between Freud's theory and Erikson's theory. In Erikson's theory, one of the main aspects is the stages of development that he discussed in terms of personality development, which is the focus of this particular lecture. We will not be focusing on every aspect of Erikson's theory in this lecture.

Here, the focus will be more on his stages of development that he discussed. Erikson says that there are eight life crises that a child faces as they proceed through different stages of life, from childhood to old age. Accordingly, there are eight stages of development. Each life crisis serves as an opportunity for stimulating certain changes in the personality or possibility of changes in the personality. In this eight-life crisis, Erikson believed that human beings face eight major crises or conflicts throughout their lives. Each conflict emerges at a specific time due to biological maturation and social demands experienced at a particular stage. So, different stages have different demands and challenges, and there are eight life stages.

Successfully resolving each conflict prepares the individual for the next life crisis. If one is able to adapt successfully in each of these crises, they will proceed very smoothly to the next stage of life. If they are not able to resolve the life crisis, there will be some issues in the next stages. Erikson's developmental stages do not end at adolescence or young adulthood. Unlike Freud's theory, it extends to old age.

Freud was mostly focused on the period till adolescence. Beyond that, he did not focus much because, for him, personality does not change much after that. However, Erikson talked about different stages till old age. These are the eight stages that Erikson talked about.

Stage one is the infancy stage. Trust versus mistrust. Stage 2 is autonomy versus shame and doubt. Stage 3 is initiative versus guilt. Stage 4 is industry versus inferiority. Stage 5 is identity versus role confusion. Stage 6 is intimacy versus self-absorption. Stage 7 is generativity versus stagnation. Stage 8, which is in old age, is integrity versus despair. So, if you look at these stages, these are different stages in different periods of one's life cycle. So, infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, early adulthood, adulthood, and old age.

In each of these stages, there are different life crises according to the different stages he proposed. Let us look into each of these stages in a very brief or summarized form.

Stage 1, trust versus mistrust, is a stage in the infancy period. It starts from when a child is born until 18 months of life. These are like lump-sum time periods given. From infancy to 18 months of life, infants go through a stage called trust versus mistrust.

What happens here? Erikson's first stage is basic trust versus mistrust, which is seen in the infancy period and shapes the child's outlook on life. This stage aligns with Freud's oral stage but focuses more on the infant's emotional and psychological needs rather than sensuality. Erikson was more focused on emotional, psychological, and social factors, whereas Freud was mostly focused on biological aspects. One of the challenges an infant faces in this stage, from birth until 18 months, is the conflict between trust and mistrust.

Basic trust develops when an infant receives consistent and sensitive care from their parents or caregivers. The development of trust is connected to how the parents interact with the child. If they receive consistent and sensitive care from their parents or caregivers, they develop trust in the primary caregiver. The infant learns that their needs will be met, which fosters a sense of security. If there is enough care, the child also develops a sense of security with the caregiver or parents, whoever is taking care of them.

They begin to perceive the world as a safe and reliable place. The child learns to feel secure in the presence of their caregiver and perceives the world as a more reliable and secure place. Once this trust develops—which is a successful resolution—it means the child has developed trust. This stage results in the infant developing a sense of coherent selfhood

and the foundational capacity for hope. This trust is very important for the child's development and progression to the next stage.

Therefore, this is something very important in terms of the healthy development of a child. Now, there can be mistrust also in this stage. It can arise when infants do not receive reliable and nurturing care from the caregiver and may feel neglected or abandoned, leading to feelings of insecurity.

They may view the world as unpredictable and threatening. In some cases, there may be a possibility that certain children may not receive a consistent or caring relationship for some reason. In such cases, the child may develop mistrust and feel insecure, which may become part of their worldview in the later stages. They may view the world as an unpredictable and threatening place because they are not getting the security that is needed at this stage. So, this unresolved issue in this stage can make one vulnerable to serious mental disorders, and one may also lack confidence in oneself and others. Hence, there can be many complications can arise later if such mistrust develops at this stage. Therefore, by establishing basic trust, infants gain a sense of stability and continuity essential for their emotional development and future relationships.

Conversely, if mistrust predominates, it can impede their ability to form healthy relationships and maintain a positive outlook on life. So, this stage becomes a foundation for trusting and mistrusting, which can continue in the other stages in the future or even during adulthood. This can also impact their relationships with other people, which can continue in the later stages of life.

The next stage is called autonomy versus shame and doubt. This stage comprises the toddler years, from 18 months to 3 years of age.

This is the stage where the child has to face another challenge, the challenge of autonomy versus shame and doubt. The task that the child needs to focus on at this stage is building autonomy. If there is no autonomy, then they feel shame and doubt. Erikson's second stage is about autonomy versus shame and doubt, which is the stage the child has to face during the toddler stage, from 18 months to 3 years of age. This stage is characterized by the child's growing physical abilities and the desire for independence.

The child slowly learns to walk and explore the environment because of their own curious and active nature, they explore many things in the environment. They slowly develop a sense of independence, a sense of going or moving around alone as their physical abilities

develop at this stage. Autonomy emerges as a toddler develops greater muscular control and the ability to perform tasks independently, such as walking and moving around. Children strive to assert their new capabilities and master new actions, leading to a sense of will and independence. The child independently wants to explore the world. Positive outcomes occur when parents and caregivers support the child's efforts, encourage exploration and self-sufficiency while providing appropriate guidance.

So positive outcomes, or a sense of autonomy, develop—that 'I can do things on my own'—when the parents and caregivers give necessary support in that direction. With obvious limitations, you cannot just give the child everything they want to do. However, with certain limitations, parents can give them a healthy sense of autonomy so that whenever they explore, it can be encouraged within certain limits. So, positive outcomes can occur when parents and caregivers support the child's efforts—whatever they are trying to do in terms of exploring—encouraging exploration and self-sufficiency while providing necessary guidance. Successful navigation of this stage results in the child developing a sense of autonomy, confidence, and pride in their abilities.

So, whenever toddlers are able to do something on their own, they feel pride and a sense of autonomy, independence, which is a positive outcome for this particular stage of life. Shame and doubt is another possibility that can arise when parents and caregivers are overcritical, over controlling, or harsh in their responses to the child's attempt for independence. So, if the child is trying to do something or moving around and if parents or caregivers become over controlling and not letting the child to do anything on their own, then probably that sense of autonomy will not develop in the child. The child may feel humiliated and doubt their abilities.

The child will doubt their abilities and think that they cannot do anything, leading to feelings of shame and a lack of self-confidence. This can be the negative aspect of not letting the child experience autonomy. A “precocious conscience” may develop, characterized by a critical and belittling internal voice that undermines the child's sense of self-worth. This can result in over-controlled behavior and a persistent fear of making mistakes.

So, the child will always feel fearful in exploring if such kind of shame and doubt develops in this stage. So, balancing autonomy and socialization is key during this stage. Child needs opportunities to explore themselves, develop a sense of self-control and independence, and also learn societal expectations. We cannot allow children to do anything they want; there

has to be certain limits of learning societal expectation and boundaries are necessary and should be taught to them, but parents should not be over controlling and over critical. So, encouraging autonomy within a supportive environment helps foster confidence and healthy sense of independence, conversely suppressing the child's efforts can lead to lasting feelings of inadequacy and doubt. So, in this stage, based on their development, children can develop a sense of autonomy or shame and doubt. One is the positive aspect; another is negative aspects. So, positive resolution in this stage will lead to a sense of autonomy. If a sense of autonomy does not develop, then it may lead to a sense of self-doubt and lack of confidence, which may hamper the next other stages of development.

The next stage is the preschool years from age 3 to 5 years. The child faces another challenge, which is initiative versus guilt. So, in this stage, child is faced with the challenge of initiative. Initiative and guilt are the two spectrum or two sides.

If initiative doesn't develop, then guilt can arise. This is a stage from age 3 to 5 before school, but nowadays school starts at 3, but proper schooling starts from 6 years of age from class 1. These are like pre-school or pre-primary stage.

This stage builds upon the child's growing sense of autonomy, focusing on the development of initiative and the capacity to set and pursue goals. In the earlier stage, the child was exploring and learning to be autonomous and independent. If the sense of autonomy develops properly in the earlier stage, then they can take initiative in different aspects of their life.

The children begin to assert themselves more frequently, planning activities, making up games, and initiating play with others. So, more initiative will develop. They will try to do a lot of things like initiating activities and making games. So autonomy will lead to more initiative in the child's behavior.

So they will develop a sense of purpose and the ability to pursue goals in a purposeful and future-oriented manner. Play becomes a critical medium through which they experiment with leadership, decision-making, and achievement goals. The child displays all this initiative in the context of their behavior, their playful situation. They can explore leadership, initiate, decision-making, and achieve goals during their childhood period.

So, the successful resolution of this stage is that the child emerges with a sense of initiative. They will have confidence that they can start something, pursue certain goals, achieve those goals, take initiative, develop leadership abilities, and have confidence in their ability to

make decisions and take actions. So this is the positive aspect of this stage. If it is properly resolved, then the child will learn to take initiative in their life.

Now, on the flip side or the negative aspect of this stage is that the child can also learn to feel guilty. It can arise if children are discouraged from taking initiative in this stage, either through overly strict or critical parenting or through their excessive guilt for being too assertive. So, it can come from the caregivers if they are too critical and they do not allow the child to take any initiative which can hamper their sense of initiative and can turn into guilt or doubt. Sometimes the child gets the message that taking more initiative is not a good thing, and then they stop being assertive. So, that can also lead to feelings of guilt.

Fear of punishment for their initiative or guilt over their ambitions can inhibit their willingness to pursue goals and take risks. So certain dynamics from the caregiver, as well as their own understanding and impact, can also lead to feelings of guilt. They may develop a sense of being a nuisance to others, leading to a reduced ability to initiate activities or interact socially. If they are criticized every time after taking initiative, they will learn that taking initiative is accepted, which may also reduce their ability to initiate activities or interact socially. If unresolved, children may become inhibited and reluctant to engage in self-initiated activities, leading to a lack of confidence in their ability to make decisions and pursue goals. So, this is the flip side of it, the negative aspect of it. If they do not develop initiative, the other possibility is that they will develop a certain sense of guilt. So with a supportive environment, when children are encouraged to take initiative within their childhood environment, that sets reasonable boundaries, they develop a healthy sense of ambition and responsibility. Conversely, excessive criticism or punishment can stifle the initiative, leading to an overly cautious and inhibited approach to life. Then the whole initiative approach will be suppressed within the child. So this is the stage where this is the possibility.

Both possibilities are present. A successful resolution will lead to a child taking more initiative.

The next stage is middle school years from 6 to 11 years. The child faces the challenge of industry versus inferiority. So, this is typically the initial school stage.

This stage focuses on the development of industriousness and competence in children as they engage in learning and social activities. This is the stage where they engage in learning new things, going to school, and going to a proper social environment. The children get not just a family environment, they also get a school environment, where the peer groups

and other things come into the picture. The industry aspect that develops is a positive aspect of this stage. The children at this stage are encouraged to achieve mastery over tasks and skills that are valued by society, such as academic achievement, sports, arts, and social interaction. So these are the things they start learning in this stage: sports, academic achievements, arts, and social interactions.

So these are the things that become an important part in this stage of life. Therefore, the children develop a sense of industry through their efforts to complete tasks and succeed in areas that require perseverance and dedication. They learn to excel in those activities at this stage. That's the industry part.

Success in this stage leads to feelings of competence, diligence, and a sense of accomplishment. So slowly, in this stage, the child learns to feel a sense of accomplishment when they successfully do something, whatever task is given in school. So they develop a sense of industry. However, in this stage, if proper development doesn't happen and certain problems occur, then the child may also develop a sense of inferiority. So, failure to achieve mastery or industry, failure to meet societal expectations during this stage, can lead to feelings of inferiority. Whatever task is given to them, children may feel inadequate compared to their peers and experience a sense of incompetence. This is the stage where they also start comparing themselves with others in their same age group in schools. If they are not able to perform properly or adequately, they may also develop a sense of inferiority. This comparison to others in terms of competence can contribute to feelings of social inferiority and low self-esteem. This is a possibility that can happen in this stage of life, where they first start comparing themselves in terms of performance with their peer group. So, this is the challenge. So, they may become highly industrious by getting involved with the activities and performing tasks, leading to the development of a sense of industry. However, if they are not able to perform, they may develop a sense of inferiority in comparison to others. So, this is the challenge of this stage. The successful resolution in this stage leads to the development of a sense of industry. They learn to value hard work, perseverance, and the satisfaction of achieving goals through sustained effort.

They feel competent and capable of tackling new challenges. So, these are the challenges that the children are exposed to in this stage; successful resolution will lead to all these positive qualities. If they are not able to successfully resolve in this stage, they may struggle and develop feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. They may also start avoiding tasks that challenge them, may develop a fear of failure, and may perceive themselves as less

competent. Persistent feelings of inferiority can impact self-esteem and motivation. If an inferiority complex develops in this stage, it can also continue in the next stage.

It can also continue in the other stages of life. So, each stage impacts the next stage. Therefore, a successful or unsuccessful resolution for each stage will impact the next stage, as the same person moves to the next stage. If they are not able to resolve or positively develop in one stage, the negative aspect will continue in the next stage, and they will be less likely to fulfill the requirements of the next stage. So, successful resolution in each stage depends on the success of the next stage also.

Therefore, all the stages are connected. The next stage is during the teenage years, which is from age 12 to 18 years. This is the stage where, according to Erikson, the main issue that adolescents or teenagers face is identity confusion or a sense of identity. So, a big question in this stage, according to Erikson's model, is the development of a sense of identity—who am I?

So, typically occurring during adolescence, this teenage period, this stage is crucial for the formation of a stable, coherent sense of self. Who am I? What is my identity?

The boys and girls in this stage face the challenge of finding identity, and they explore this sense of identity in many ways. Erikson is widely known for this idea of identity, which he described as a sense of being a unique individual with a meaningful role in society and life. Questions like “how do you define yourself?” or “What is your role in society?” are a part of one’s sense of identity.

According to Erikson, developing a sense of identity is a significant developmental achievement, particularly during this stage. This stage involves forming a coherent sense of personal goals, motives, interests, tastes, and social roles, culminating in a clear and self-reflective understanding of oneself and one’s future. Issues such as what people want to do in life, what their prospects are, and what their role is in society are all part of the struggle faced by people in this stage. This is a stage where one can develop a sense of identity, or one may develop a lot of confusion about identity.

This could also be a very confusing stage. Some people develop a coherent sense of self; a lot of people cannot develop it, and they remain in the stage of identity confusion. This is the main aspect of this stage. The positive outcome is if one is successfully able to develop a sense of identity, know what they want to do, and know about their role in society, then they will explore different roles, beliefs, and ideas, ultimately integrating all of them into

a coherent sense of self. They emerge with a clear understanding of their values, goals, and place in society. The negative outcome emerges when they fail to establish a clear identity, which may result in role confusion or identity confusion. Adolescents may struggle to define themselves and their future, leading to uncertainty, confusion, or a fragmented sense of self.

This could be very common for a lot of people in this stage. Some adolescents may avoid this confusion. Sometimes, to merely avoid this confusion, they prematurely commit to a certain unexamined identity, often centered on a specific vocational goal. Erikson referred to this as foreclosures. Many adolescents in this stage are not very clear what they want to do in their lives, so they just commit to something that they draw from their parents or society. For example, adolescents might make career choices without thoroughly examining their interest or their calling, they might choose by viewing others making the same choice.

Mostly in the context of a vocational career, they do not properly examine what they want to do. So, these people, according to Erikson, are called foreclosures. They prematurely conclude about something without really examining it.

Erikson believed that a period of exploration, where various roles, personal styles, and interests are tested, is developmentally superior to foreclosure. So, to decide upon something without really examining is not a good idea, according to Erikson. Exploring various roles and personal styles before committing to something is better, according to Erikson, because then people go deeper into their sense of identity.

Erikson highlighted how university years often serve as a “moratorium” period where you explore a lot of possibilities. People could keep exploring for a certain period of time, and universities and colleges can give you a lot of options or opportunities for exploration. So, in the teenage stage, identity and identity confusion could be a big challenge.

After the teenage stage, the next stage is young adulthood. It starts from 18 years to around 40 years. Now, this is the stage where the major challenge comes from the issue of intimacy versus isolation. The main crisis in this stage is about forming intimate, loving relationships with other people. Positive outcomes in this stage would be individuals who have developed a strong sense of identity in the last stage, they are generally able to form deep, meaningful relationships. They experience intimacy, mutual respect, commitment, contributing to a sense of connectedness and fulfillment. Therefore, if someone can develop properly in this stage, they form an intimate relationship with other people.

People explore a sense of intimacy with any kind of relationship, like friends or romantic partners. The negative outcome of this stage could be a fear of losing personal identity, leading to isolation. Individuals may avoid close relationships or engage in shallow, self-centered, or self-sabotaging behaviors, resulting in loneliness and emotional isolation. If you are not able to form a proper relationship with other people, then isolation could be the natural outcome, which could be a negative aspect in terms of development. So this is the main challenge in this stage.

These are some of the major challenges that one faces in a particular stage of life. However, it doesn't mean that this is the only challenge for a stage. According to Erikson's perspective of personality development, these are some of the major challenges in these stages of life.

The next stage is middle adulthood, which is from 40 years of age to 65 years. The major challenge in this stage is generativity versus stagnation in life. So, the main crisis is contributing to society and helping to guide future generations. Positive outcomes in this stage lead to generativity. Individuals feel productive and involved in meaningful work, family life, and community activities. They contribute to the well-being of future generations and experience a sense of purpose and accomplishment. So, in this stage, when one feels a sense of purpose and meaning in life, they are in the stage of generativity. Their life seems to be more meaningful in terms of family life, work life, community activities, social roles, etc.

So that's the positive aspect of it. If one is not able to experience this meaningfulness of life, then the negative outcome will include failure to find ways to contribute, resulting in stagnation. One may feel stagnated in life. So in this stage, the challenge is that one can feel stagnated in life, or one may feel generativity in life. Generativity in life involves feeling more flow in life, having a meaningful life, making more contributions to society, etc. Therefore, a positive outcome leads to generativity, while a negative outcome leads to stagnation in life.

The last stage is late adulthood, that is, 65 plus years, which is the old age or late adulthood. The main challenge in this stage is integrity versus despair. This is the stage that we typically call the old age period.

In this stage, the major challenge is to develop a sense of integrity, or if it doesn't develop, then one may experience despair in life. So, the crisis is mostly related to reflecting on life and feeling a sense of fulfillment, or if one doesn't feel fulfillment, then one regrets one's life. So, a positive outcome in this stage will lead to a successful resolution, leading to a

sense of integrity. Individuals will reflect on their lives with satisfaction, feeling a sense of completeness and fulfillment.

They accepted their life as it is and are ready to face the end of life with a sense of peace. So, integrity results when you experience your life and perceive your life as successful or feel that you did your best in your life. You reflect on your life with a certain sense of satisfaction. You fulfilled all the responsibilities of your life. When you feel a sense of completeness and fulfillment, you feel a sense of integrity in old age, and you are ready to face the ultimate death.

The negative outcome could be failure to achieve integrity, resulting in despair in life. Individuals may reflect on their life with regret, feeling that they have missed many opportunities or made mistakes. This leads to feelings of bitterness, depression, and hopelessness.

So, if you look at your life with despair and with bitterness, and you see a lot of regrets in your life, you can experience a sense of despair also. When we talk about all these aspects, it all depends on how the person perceives life at this stage. Even though one may have many regrets in life, but still at an old age one can experience integrity depending on how they interpret their world.

So, it depends on how you perceive your life, how you integrate all these aspects into your sense of self, which may lead to positive or negative outcomes. So, according to Erikson's theory, integrity versus despair is the challenge for this stage of life.

These are like eight stages, according to Erikson, that we experience or pass through from birth till old age. Each stage has certain distinct challenges, and one may resolve them positively or may not be able to resolve them, which may lead to certain negative outcomes. A positive outcome in one stage leads to better prospects in the next stage.

So, to conclude what we have discussed in all stages. Erikson's theory has eight stages or ages of man, which provide a developmental framework for how a child develops in the different stages of life. Each stage represents a task that one has to fulfill, and one must resolve certain issues with more or less favorable outcomes. Successfully navigating each of the stages leads to the development of qualities such as basic trust, autonomy, initiative, integrity etc.

So, if one can resolve these issues or challenges, then certain positive qualities will develop in the personality. However, difficulties in navigating each of the stages can result in

personality weakness characteristics of that stage. Each of the stages has certain tasks, and if one is not able to resolve them, then it will result in personality weakness.

According to Erikson, whether someone successfully negotiates a stage depends significantly on the quality of support from the environment, which includes social, cultural, and physical aspects. Whether one is able to resolve all these problems and issues in different stages of life depends on what kind of support the person gets from the environment, from the family environment, from the social environment, from the cultural environment, and from the physical aspects of the environment. Therefore, resolution depends a lot on the environmental aspect in which one is growing at that stage of life. In the earlier stages of development, the family environment is very important. What kind of parenting, what kind of support system you get from the parents and caregivers, plays a very important role.

If you get positive support, then positive qualities will develop. For instance, an infant develops a sense of trust based on the perception that their needs are consistently and sensitively met by caregivers. In contrast, a caregiver who is inadequate, cold, chaotic, or rigid can lead to deep-seated mistrust. As individuals grow, their environment plays a very important role. The school environment is important in fostering a child's sense of industry, while the workplace environment is very important for the development of generativity in life.

As one progresses in development, different environments become more important. In infancy, the parental environment is always very important. At school age, peer groups become more important; in workplaces, the workplace environment plays a very important role.

So, different environments become more important in the different stages of life. Erikson's analysis extends beyond just the social environment. He also talked about broader cultural factors, which can also shape one's personality. He posited that cultural child-rearing practices significantly impact personality development.

If these practices fail to meet an infant's need for responsiveness, a pattern of mistrust might develop within the culture. Now, what is the broad cultural practice of child-rearing? So different cultures may have different patterns of child-rearing habits or patterns. In Western culture, they take care of children in certain ways that might be different from Eastern culture. So, what is the broad pattern of child-rearing that will impact their personality? Because then every parent will try to practice those methods that are inbuilt in their culture.

So, broad cultural factors can play a role here. Similarly, if a culture does not allow its youth to explore different ways of being before conforming to workplace discipline, adults might lack a coherent sense of self.

The kind of exploration possibilities given by the cultural environment will also influence how they resolve the problems of different stages of life. If a culture does not provide opportunities for adults to engage in productive work and service, a prevalent sense of stagnation could occur. Therefore, culture dictates the environment, or culture is an important aspect of the environment.

Now, in Erikson's theory, he states that different stages of life have different challenges that one tries to resolve. However, trait psychologists describe traits as relatively stable characteristics of one's personality. Therefore, there is a paradox between Erikson's theory of different transformations in different stages and the trait theorists' view of traits as stable characteristics. So, how do we resolve this paradox?

We can just look at a few factors to resolve this.

One is that it is important to note that there may not be much conflict. It apparently looks like there is not much of a conflict here.

As Erikson's 5 stages occur mostly during the years when longitudinal studies typically show only moderate trade stability. If you see the 5 stages among the 8, it occurs till 30 or 40 years of age. Many longitudinal studies in this period show only moderate stability of the trait. This means the traits could change. Research shows there is a sense of stability of traits, but within that, in the earlier phases of life, the traits are more likely to change. Therefore, it is possible that traits can change. So, in that sense, you know there is not much conflict here.

Secondly, Erikson's stage theory is more concerned with absolute stability rather than rank order stability. His theory addresses the normal changes that differentiate the personalities of people of various ages. So, he talks about normal changes that everybody goes through that differentiate the personalities of people of various ages. Thus, individuals might exhibit relatively successful resolutions of successive stages, even as their personalities manifest different themes at each stage.

So, the idea is, he is more concerned with certain absolute changes that occur, which is also backed by research, as it shows that there can be certain absolute level changes in the personality traits. But there can be rank-order consistency, as we discussed in the last

lecture, that compared to other people, you maintain your rank. Let us say you have a higher score on extroversion compared to your peer group. Generally, the research shows people maintain the differences even though the absolute score of extroversion will change for both groups.

But they maintain that distance. Whoever is higher on their score remains higher. Whoever is lower on their score remains lower. But that does not mean their score does not change. Their score changes.

But their relative position seems to remain the same. So, there is not much contradiction here. Because Erikson is mostly talking about absolute changes, which research also confirms that these changes can occur even in traits.

So basically, there is not much contradiction in that sense. So his theory addresses this: everybody goes through those changes, which are basically absolute changes in certain phases of life. But he is not denying that the relative change may remain or the relative position may remain the same. So his theory addresses these normal changes that differentiate the personalities of people at various stages. The individual might exhibit successful resolution of successive stages, even as their personality manifests different themes at different stages.

Thus, there is no contradiction as such in terms of talking about certain transformations that happen in the different stages of life. Erikson's concept that the resolution of each stage forms a foundation for the resolution of subsequent stages supports this idea of rank-order stability. If you have resolved the earlier stage's problem, then you are more likely to resolve the next stage's problem. If you are not able to resolve the earlier stage, then you are less likely to resolve the next stage also, because these stages are all connected. This also explains rank-order stability.

If you can resolve the conflict at one stage, you will be more likely to resolve the conflict at the next stage. So your position will be maintained. So, this is also related to the rank-order stability that we talked about in the last lecture. The same individuals who successfully navigate one stage are likely to navigate the next stage successfully, because each stage is connected to the next. This implies that while the themes and focuses of an individual's personality may change over time, the relative success with which they handle these changes remains constant.

So each individual may change. There is no problem with that. But the relative position may remain the same because how one resolves the previous stage's task will impact their next stage. So, the relative position may remain the same.

So, in that sense, you know, there is not much contradiction if you look at a deeper level. Apparently, it looks like trait psychology is against these personality developmental theories. But if you look deeper, you know, there is not much actual difference. So, these are some of the things about this stage of Erikson's eight stages of development.

We will be talking about another theory of development in the next lecture. So, with this I will stop here. Thank you.