

Hello and welcome to the T.Y.B.Sc. Honors Program in Home Science.

Today we'll be looking at the subject Theories of Human Development and we will be studying the ecological theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner.

In this you will learn the biosketch of Urie Bronfenbrenner, the ecological systems theory proposed by him, and an evaluation of the same.

At the end of this presentation, the student will be able to understand the Ecological Systems theory of Yuri Bronfenbrenner and understand the application of this theory.

A brief biosketch.

Yuri Bronfenbrenner was born on the 29th of April 1917 in Moscow, Russia. However, his family soon moved to the United States of America, and he spent most of his life there.

He went to Cornell for his undergraduate degree in psychology and Music and later studied at Harvard for his Masters in Arts.

He earned a PhD in developmental psychology from the University of Michigan and also served in the US Army Medical Corps.

In 1948, he accepted a professorship in human development, family studies and psychology

at Cornell University.

Through his ecological systems theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner explained how inherent qualities developed by children and their environments interact to influence how these children grow and develop. He emphasized the importance of studying children in different environments known as ecological systems in order to understand their development more holistically. His work with the United States Government helped in the formation of what we call today, the Head Start Program in 1965. The Head Start program is popularly known for its television series called SesameStreet, which later got replicated in India in the early 2000s as Galli Galli Sim Sim., He died when he was 88 years old on the 25th of September 2005, so we can consider him a psychologist who's life has spanned this decade in which we live as well. Now, according to Urie Bronfenbrenner, there are four ecological systems which an individual potentially interacts with. Each of these systems. Asyou will see in the diagram, are nested within each other.

Children typically find themselves enmeshed in various ecosystems during their life,from the most intimate, which is

right in the middle. As you see, the circle of the individual to the largest system which is marked in green color - the macrosystem. Each of these ecological systems interact with and influence each other in different aspects of these children's lives. The first system we will look at is what he called the Micro System. Micro, meaning the smallest system. This is the smallest and most immediate environment in which children first come into, and will comprise naturally their home in which they are born, the school that they go to or the daycare center in which they are left, the friends and the peers with whom they play and the community or environment of children in which they grow up. The interactions with the micro system involve interactions mainly with their family members, their classmates in school, their teachers their peers their friends, and also any other caregivers.

How these groups or individuals interact with these children affects how these children grow. This is what Urie Bronfenbrenner tried to propagate, that the interactions of the child with this micro system starts to influence how this child develops.

Next we move to the next system, which is called the mesosystem.

This is the layer surrounding the microsystem and it encompasses. The interactions between the characters who are within the microsystem like a relationship between the child's family and the child schoolteacher. So these are two people who are in the micro system, and the mesosystem talks about the interactions between the participants of the micro system. For any interaction to qualify as part of this mesosystem, it has to be a direct interaction between two features of the biological ecosystem which influence the development of the child, so it cannot be the child and somebody else who is not directly interacting with the child because the teacher is in direct interaction with the child and the parent is in direct interaction with the child, any interaction between the parent and the teacher would comprise what Urie Bronfenbrenner called the mesosystem.

Next is the exosystem. This is the third layer which incorporates elements of all the bio-ecological systems which do not directly affect the child, but can have an indirect influence on the child. For example, the parents

workplace. The child does not interact with the parents' workplace. However, whatever happens in the parents workplace can affect how the parent interacts with the child. For example, if a parent loses their job or gets fired or has their working hours either increased or decreased. Thus, what is happening in the exosystem directly influences how the parent interacts with the child and therefore affects the child, creating parental stress, reducing family income. Therefore this has an effect on how the child will develop, so the exosystem consists of systems which relate to the child but which the child is not directly involved in.

Then we have the macrosystem, which is the largest and the most distant collection of people and places which can have significant influences on the child but the child is not directly in touch with these systems.

This ecological system is composed of a child's cultural patterns, the culture, or the caste or the race into which he was born. The values which are propagated by that particular group, their dominant beliefs, ideas, religious beliefs, political and economic systems that govern that

particular group. For example, children who live in geographical areas, which are owned by war, will experience a different kind of development than children who grew up in peaceful environments. Now the child is directly apart of this system, but does not do anything to influence the system. Rather, what happens in the macro system indirectly influences the child. Lastly, we have the concept of the Chronosystem.

The Chronosystem adds a dimension which was not talked about before, that is the different dimension of time.

The chronology of time in which era is a child living in, which century is a child living in, which decade is a child living, and what are the major things that have affected the world or the globe in these decades. So this demonstrates the influence of change as well as constancy in children's environment. The Chronosystem may include, for example, people who lived in the 1950s, mostly lived in joint families, but if you look at people who live in the 2000s, or this century that we call it, they live mainly in nuclear family structures, so this family structure changing over a period of time or moving from one Chronosystem to another could affect the development of the child parents

employment status, societal changes, economic changes, political changes. For example, political differences between the time of the World War or Hitler's rule versus who was ruling certain countries at this point of time. All these can have an effect on the development of the child, although it is indirect.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provided us with an insight into all the different factors that play a role in the growth and development of individuals. He's one of the first theorists who has directed people's attention to the fact that even far reaching events and even global events can have effects on the child, although indirectly.

The theory also shows us how all the factors are actually related to each other and they do impact the developmental cycle of the child. Bronfenbrenner, however, does not discuss the factors in each system explicitly, but he only provides us with theoretical analytical frameworks to understand this.

He also does not take into account the Inter relationships between the bigger system like the Chronosystem and the exosystem and their influences on the child, and he does not consider the nature of resilience of each child as a

factor that may affect these interactions. He does not take into account the personal level of each child like many events may happen in the child's life, but each child reacts differently so he does not take into account that personal resilience of children when he formulated his theory.

For more information you could refer to these sources. Thank you.