

EXTENDED SUMMARY

The main objective of this work is to analyze some of the characteristics of psychological development in adulthood according to the theoretical framework of authors such as Erikson, Havighurst and Baltes, within the perspective of the Psychology of the Life Cycle. To do this, an interview was conducted to two participants belonging to the last stage of Erikson through his Life Stories.

The Life Cycle Psychology tries to identify the factors that influence the evolutionary trajectories and the main processes through which we are able to shape our own life (Villar & Triadó, 2006).

The proposal raised by Erik Erikson (1985, 2000), gives importance to how people face a series of conflicts linked to a certain age to achieve a full development. Therefore, the life cycle is seen as an open process in which both losses and gains can occur at different ages, depending on whether or not each of the typical crossroads of each moment is solved. According to the author, these crossroads are represented in eight fundamental stages of human development in people's lives. For the realization of the study, we focus on the last stage.

Stage 8: Integrity of the Self versus Despair. In this phase the person faces to the presence of a few of future perspectives cut away and therefore, to death. According to the author, at this time the person should review his own life. When this is carried out satisfactorily, the person feels that it has been worth living, therefore, life is seen as a significant whole. On the contrary, if the resolution turns out to be negative, it would entail repentances and remorse in relation to the decisions made in the past. The person feels disappointed and sorry, but at the same time is aware that there is no turning back and therefore, he sees death closer and with fear.

The second author we name is Havighurst (1972). This author complements the stages of Erikson proposing the concept of evolutionary task and defines them as specific goals that the person has to achieve when a certain moment of life approaches. The different tasks are organized in an "evolutionary calendar" that allows us to form expectations about the level of development and the characteristic social situation at a certain age. In addition, it proposes that the tasks are linked together, so that achieving one facilitates the achievement of other tasks in the future.

Finally, Paul Baltes (1999) and his proposal on the life cycle seeks to reformulate the concept of development so that it can be applicable to all life. It goes beyond the traditional division between inheritance and environment, and differentiates between three major groups of factors that determine evolutionary change. 1) *Normative influences related to age*: biological or social factors that manifest in certain ages and affect the majority of the population. 2) *Normative influences related to history*: biological or social factors that influence in a general way all individuals of a certain

age, however, are specific to a determined historical moment. 3) *Non-normative influences*: are responsible that the evolutionary trajectory of the person with same age and same generation, not be exactly the equal.

Another important role it is the one that the adaptation plays. We understand by adaptation the start-up, throughout life, of three interrelated processes: selection, optimization and compensation (Baltes and Baltes, 1990). A) The selection corresponds to the choice of certain goals or domains leaving aside other alternatives. B) Optimization is the efforts to reach the highest levels of functioning in those spheres of life that we have selected as development scenarios. C) Compensation is the response to an absence or loss of a means or resource that is relevant to the achievement of the evolutionary goals we have selected.

The integration of the three mechanisms and their implementation makes the person can achieve the three main evolutionary goals: growth, maintenance and regulation of loss.

For the study of this work, the qualitative approach has been chosen against the quantitative approach, since its objective is to understand the uniqueness of individuals and communities within their own frame of reference and in their historical and cultural context (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

Regarding the analysis of the results of this research, the histories of live have been used. A first way of understanding life stories is the Narrative Approach, which proposes that life stories are the oral reconstruction of personal experiences and whose interest is focused on how the resulting stories are able to meet certain requirements of coherence and to transmit a certain image of the world, of the narrated events and the narrator. What really matters when analyzing the narrative approach is how the narrator tells the events, not the facts themselves, so the "narrative truth" is sought, which is the degree to which a story is well constructed, to what extent it represents a sufficiently good fit between the elements that compose it and is sufficiently coherent to be convincing and credible (Spence, 1982; Riessman, 1993).

To carry out this study we had the help of two male participants of 91 and 81 years respectively, in order to characterize the particularities of their lives, through the semi-structured interview (Villar & Triadó, 2006). The choice of subjects was intentionally for belonging to the last stage of Erikson. The interviews were conducted in their own homes to ensure their comfort. In addition, they had a duration of approximately four hours in both cases.

Both interviews were recorded on audio through a mobile device. Finally, transcription was carried out with the help of a computer and headphones. The transcription was based on reflect the recording literally using the Word program.

From the general objective established initially, a specific objective has been established, through which we will focus the analysis of the study in Stage 8 of Erikson (Integridad VS. Desesperanza) with the purpose of characterizing in a singular way the particularities of each subject. Thus, through our hypothesis, we hope that the method of study used is useful to identify the processes of psychological development of the subjects, and help us to describe the stage object of study.

After analyzing the results of the interview, we can affirm that the main objective has been achieved, which consisted in studying the characteristics of the psychological development of adulthood according to the theoretical framework of Erickson, Havighurst and Baltes. Therefore, this analysis has served us to identify the significant processes of the development of each subject, helping us to describe the last stage of Erikson.