

ESSENTIALS OF LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

1

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The life-span perspective
- The nature of development
- Theories of development
- Research in life-span development

THE LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE

- **Development:** Pattern of movement or change that begins at conception and continues through the human life span
- Importance of studying life-span development
 - Prepares us to take responsibility for children
 - Gives us insight about our own lives

THE LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE

- Characteristics of the life-span perspective
 - Development is:
 - Lifelong
 - Multidimensional
 - Multidirectional
 - Plastic
 - Multidisciplinary
 - Contextual
 - A process that involves growth, maintenance, and regulation of loss

THE LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE

- **Normative age-graded influences:** Similar for individuals in a particular age group
- **Normative history-graded influences:** Common to people of a particular generation because of historical circumstances
- **Nonnormative life events:** Unusual occurrences that have a major impact on an individual's life

THE LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE

- Contemporary concerns in life-span development
 - Health and well-being
 - Parenting and education
 - Sociocultural contexts and diversity
 - **Culture:** Behavior patterns, beliefs, and all other products of a group that are passed on from generation to generation

THE LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE

- **Cross-cultural studies:** Comparison of one culture with one or more other cultures
- **Ethnicity:** Based on cultural heritage, nationality characteristics, race, religion, and language
- **Socioeconomic status:** Grouping of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics
- **Gender:** Characteristics of people as males or females
- **Social policy:** National government's course of action designed to promote the welfare of its citizens

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT

Biological processes

- Changes in an individual's physical nature

Cognitive processes

- Changes in an individual's thought, intelligence, and language

Socioemotional processes

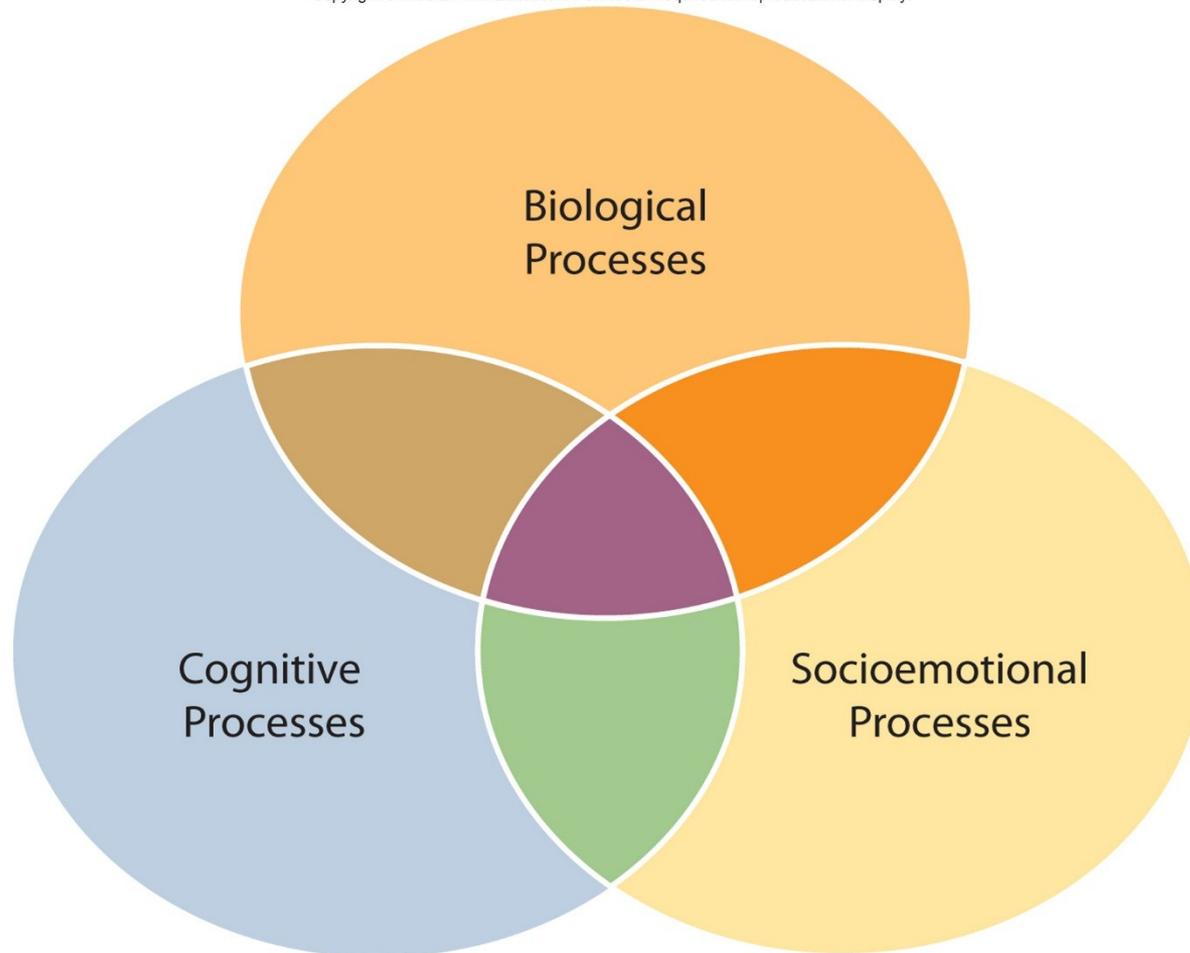
- Changes in an individual's relationships with other people, emotions, and personality

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Biological, cognitive, and socioemotional processes are inextricably intertwined
 - Connection is obvious in rapidly emerging fields of:
 - *Developmental cognitive neuroscience* - Explores links between development, cognitive processes, and the brain
 - *Developmental social neuroscience* - Examines connections between socioemotional processes, development, and the brain

FIGURE 1.4 - PROCESSES INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES

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THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Periods of development
 - Prenatal period
 - Infancy
 - Early childhood
 - Middle and late childhood
 - Adolescence
 - Early adulthood
 - Middle adulthood
 - Late adulthood

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Conceptions of age
 - Chronological age
 - Biological age - Person's age in terms of biological health
 - Psychological age - Individual's adaptive capacities compared with those of other individuals of the same chronological age
 - Social age - Connectedness with others and the social roles individuals adopt
 - Age and happiness
 - Research revealed that happiness increased with age

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Nature-nurture issue** - concerns the extent to which development is influenced by nature and by nurture
 - *Nature* – Biological inheritance
 - *Nurture* – Environmental experiences
- **Stability-change issue** – the degree to which early traits and characteristics persist through life or change
- **Continuity-discontinuity issue** – the degree to which development involves either gradual, cumulative change or distinct stages

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Scientific method
 - Conceptualize a process or problem to be studied
 - Collect research information
 - Analyze data
 - Draw conclusions
- **Theory**
 - An interrelated, coherent set of ideas that helps to explain phenomena and facilitate predictions
- **Hypotheses**
 - Specific assumptions and predictions that can be tested to determine their accuracy

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Psychoanalytic Theories** – Describe development as primarily unconscious and heavily colored by emotion
- Freud's theory – 5 stages of psychosexual development
- **Erikson's psychosocial theory** – 8 stages of psychosocial development

FIGURE 1.6 - FREUDIAN STAGES

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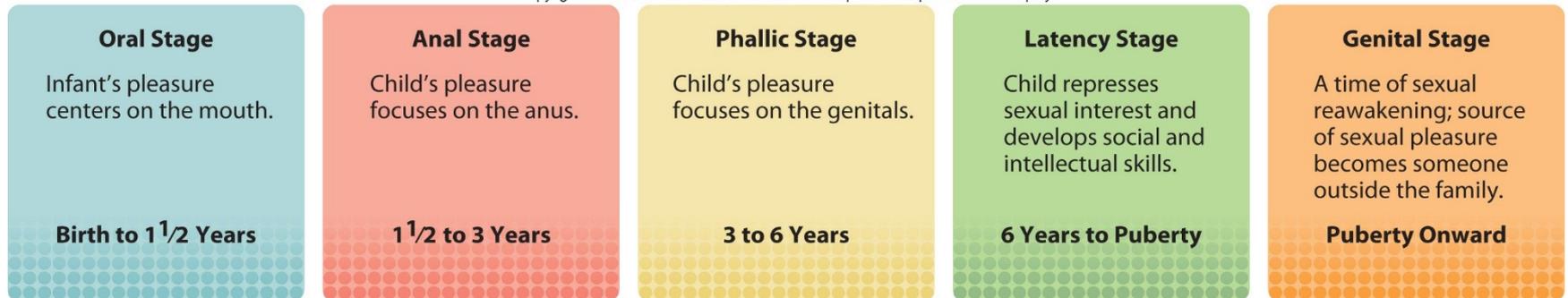


FIGURE 1.7 - ERIKSON'S EIGHT LIFE-SPAN STAGES

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Erikson's Stages	Developmental Period
Integrity versus despair	Late adulthood (60s onward)
Generativity versus stagnation	Middle adulthood (40s, 50s)
Intimacy versus isolation	Early adulthood (20s, 30s)
Identity versus identity confusion	Adolescence (10 to 20 years)
Industry versus inferiority	Middle and late childhood (elementary school years, 6 years to puberty)
Initiative versus guilt	Early childhood (preschool years, 3 to 5 years)
Autonomy versus shame and doubt	Infancy (1 to 3 years)
Trust versus mistrust	Infancy (first year)

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

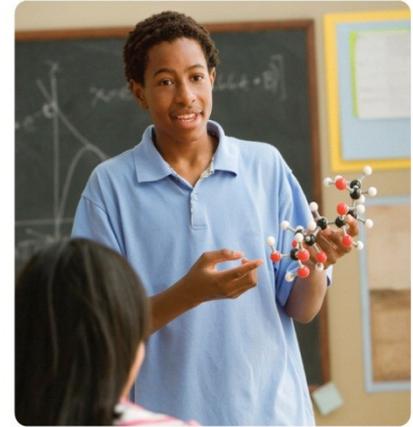
- Evaluating psychoanalytic theories
 - Emphasis on:
 - A developmental framework
 - Family relationships
 - Unconscious aspects of the mind
 - Criticisms
 - Lack of scientific support
 - Too much emphasis on sexual underpinnings
 - An image of people that is too negative

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Piaget's Cognitive Developmental theory
 - 4 stages of cognitive development as children actively construct their understanding of the world

FIGURE 1.8 - PIAGET'S FOUR STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

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Sensorimotor Stage

The infant constructs an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions. An infant progresses from reflexive, instinctual action at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought toward the end of the stage.

Birth to 2 Years of Age

Preoperational Stage

The child begins to represent the world with words and images. These words and images reflect increased symbolic thinking and go beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action.

2 to 7 Years of Age

Concrete Operational Stage

The child can now reason logically about concrete events and classify objects into different sets.

7 to 11 Years of Age

Formal Operational Stage

The adolescent reasons in more abstract, idealistic, and logical ways.

11 Years of Age Through Adulthood

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THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Vygotsky's sociocultural cognitive theory**
 - Emphasizes how culture and social interaction guide cognitive development
- **Information-processing theory:**
 - Emphasizes that individuals:
 - Manipulate information
 - Monitor it
 - Strategize about it

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

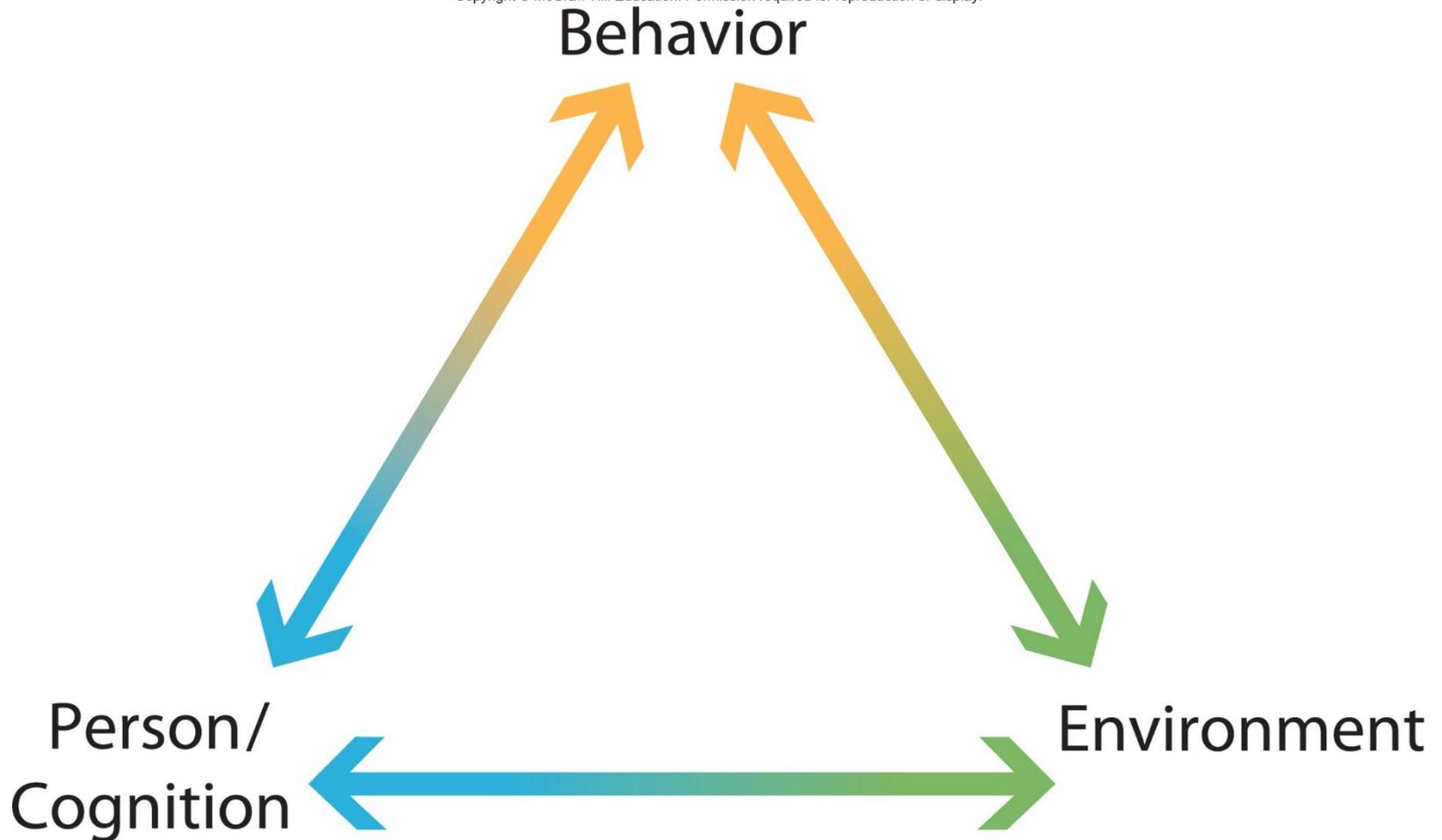
- Evaluating Cognitive Theories
 - Contributions
 - Positive view of development
 - Emphasis on the active construction of understanding
 - Criticisms
 - Skepticism about the pureness of Piaget's stages
 - Little attention to individual variations

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Behavior and Social Cognitive Theories
 - Development can be described in terms of behaviors learned through interactions with our surroundings
- Skinner's operant conditioning
 - Development consists of the pattern of behavioral changes that are brought about by rewards and punishments
- Bandura's **social cognitive theory**
 - Holds that behavior, environment, and person/cognitive factors are the key factors in development

FIGURE 1.9 - BANDURA'S SOCIAL COGNITIVE MODEL

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THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Evaluating Behavioral and Social Cognitive Theories
 - Emphasis on:
 - Scientific research
 - Environmental determinants of behavior
 - Criticisms
 - Little emphasis on cognition in Skinner's view
 - Inadequate attention paid to developmental changes

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Ethology:** Study of the behavior of animals in their natural habitat
 - Theory stresses that behavior is:
 - Strongly influenced by biology
 - Tied to evolution
 - Characterized by critical or sensitive periods
- **Lorenz's research with Greylag Geese**
 - Konrad Lorenz helped bring ethology to prominence
 - John Bowlby - Attachment to a caregiver over the first year of life has important consequences throughout the life span

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

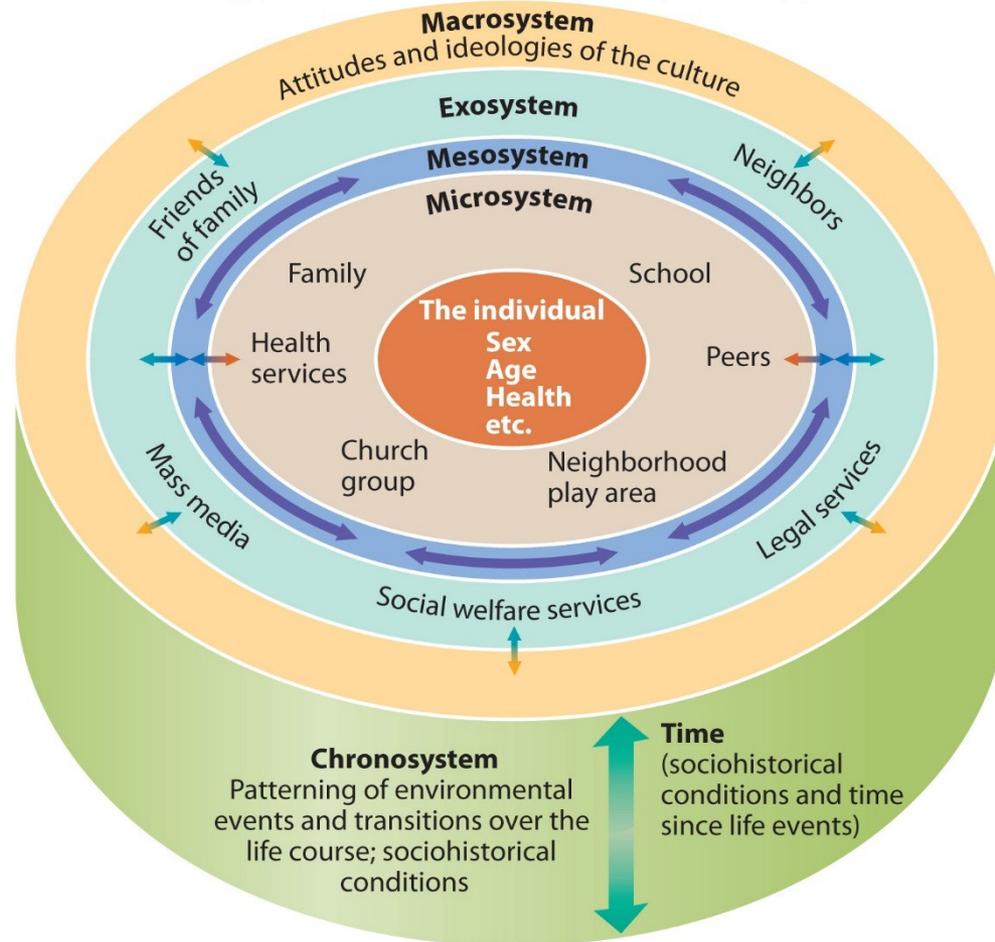
- Evaluating Ethological Theory
 - Contributions include:
 - Focus on the biological and evolutionary basis of development
 - Use of careful observations in naturalistic settings

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Ecological theory
 - Brofenbrenner's ecological theory – Focuses of 5 environmental systems:
 - *Microsystem*
 - *Mesosystem*
 - *Exosystem*
 - *Macrosystem*
 - *Chronosystem*

FIGURE 1.10 - BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT

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THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Evaluating Ecological Theory
 - Contributions include:
 - Systematic examination of macro and micro dimensions of environmental systems
 - Attention to connections between environmental systems
 - Emphasis on a range of social contexts beyond the family
 - Criticism
 - Giving inadequate attention to biological factors
 - Too little emphasis on cognitive factors

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

- No single theory can explain the rich complexity of life-span development
 - **Eclectic theoretical orientation** - Does not follow any one theoretical approach
 - Selects from each theory whatever is considered that theory's best features

RESEARCH IN LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

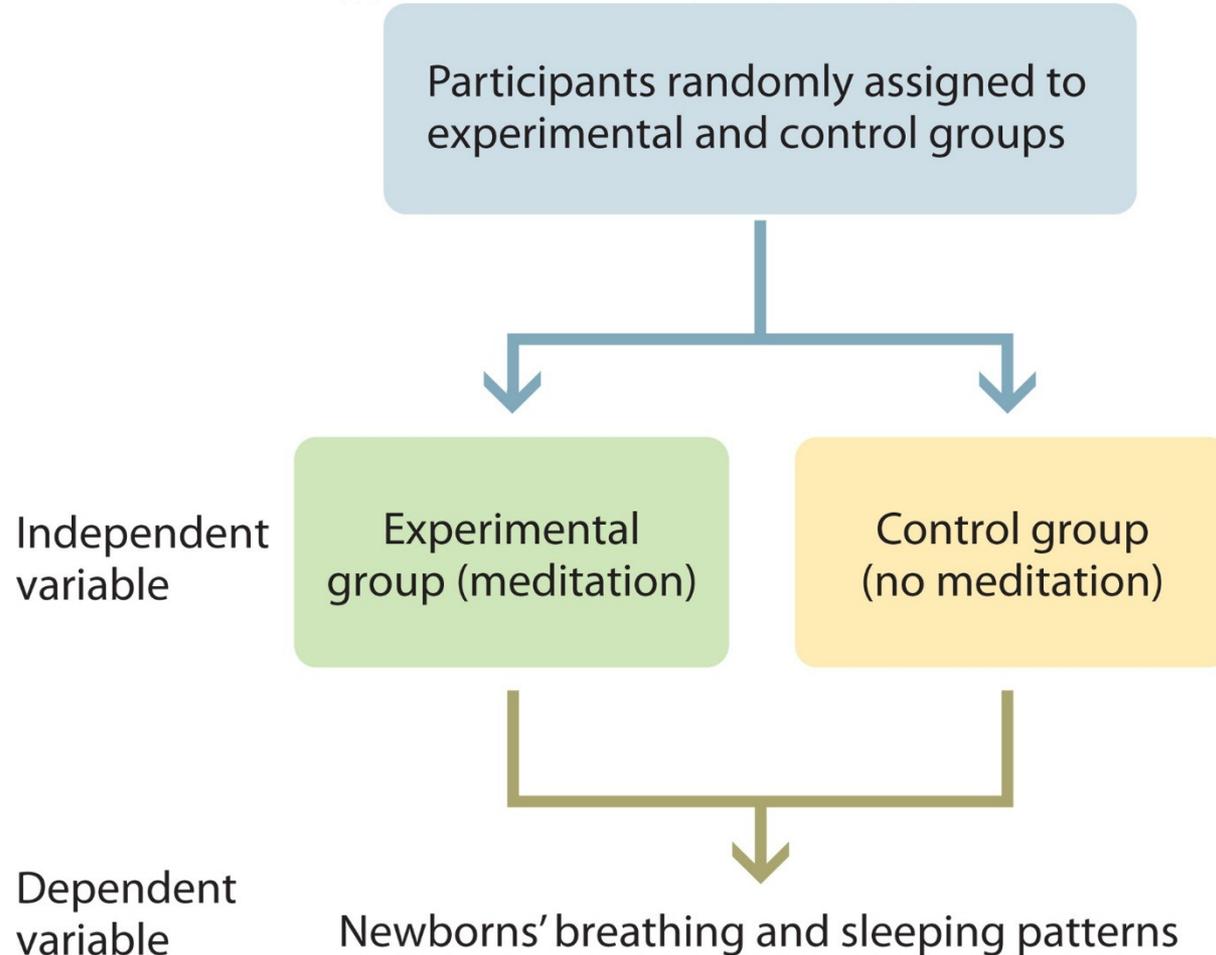
- Methods for Collecting Data
 - Observation
 - **Laboratory:** Controlled setting in which many of the complex factors of the real world are removed
 - **Naturalistic observation:** Studies that involve observing behavior in real-world settings
 - Survey and interview
 - **Standardized test:** Uniform procedures for administration and scoring
 - **Case study:** In-depth look at a single individual
 - Physiological measures

RESEARCH IN LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

- Research Designs
 - **Descriptive research:** Designed to observe and record behavior
 - **Correlational research:** Describe the strength of the relationship between two or more events or characteristics
 - **Correlation coefficient** - A number based on statistical analysis that is used to describe the degree of association between two variables
 - Ranges from -1.00 to +1.00
 - **Experiment:** One or more of the factors are manipulated while all other factors are held constant
 - Independent and dependent variables
 - Experimental and control groups

FIGURE 1.13 - PRINCIPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

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RESEARCH IN LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

- Time span of research
 - **Cross-sectional approach:** Individuals of different ages are compared at one time
 - **Longitudinal approach:** Same individuals are studied over a period of time, usually several years or more
 - **Cohort effects:** Due to a person's time of birth, era, or generation rather than the person's actual age

RESEARCH IN LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

- American Psychological Association (APA)'s ethics guidelines address:
 - *Informed consent*
 - *Confidentiality*
 - *Debriefing*
 - *Deception*