

**Module Six Project One**

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PSY-211: Lifespan Development

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## PSY 211 Project One Template

Use this template to complete your case study analysis. Answer each question with a minimum of 3 to 5 sentences. Support your answers with credible sources when appropriate. Complete this template by replacing the bracketed text with the relevant information.

### 1. Describe the ways in which **Piaget's research** applies to Jamie's development.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development applies to Jamie's development. Piaget's theory states that "The interaction between biological maturation... and experience... is responsible for the child's progress from one stage of cognitive development to a new, qualitatively different stage" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 47). Each stage of Piaget's theory (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations) is essential for a child to develop in a healthy way. Unfortunately, Jamie's mother was not present enough in Jamie's early childhood in order to help her understand her environment as well as her emotions. The experiences Jamie did have with her mother were negative, due to her mother's excessive drinking and trauma, and therefore slowed her progression through the stages. Jamie's experiences are the reason why she gets angry when she makes mistakes and why she struggles with anxiety and depression. For a child to progress through Piaget's stages of cognitive development in a healthy way, the parent needs to connect with their child and help guide their child through their challenges. Children grow and develop more in a loving and caring environment. Piaget also "... believed that the two main influences on moral development are cognitive growth and social interactions with peers" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 409). Considering Jamie's interactions with her peers, she may have less moral development. For example, she easily experiences anger towards her peers when they do not answer questions fast enough and she feels rejected by her peers when they do not allow her to prove herself to them. A child with more moral development may have more patience towards their peers and others. Parts of Jamie's development can be explained by Piaget's research and theory.

### 2. Describe the ways in which **Vygotsky's research** applies to Jamie's development.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory applies to Jamie's development. The sociocultural theory states "... that cognitive development is shaped by the sociocultural context in which it occurs and grows out of children's interactions with member of their culture (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 49). Social interaction is crucial to children's development; however, Jamie retreats and isolates herself in social situations. Jamie feels anger when waiting for her peers to respond to questions and when she feels embarrassed due to making a mistake. Jamie has learned to express her emotions through anger because of her mother. Her mother has indirectly taught Jamie to internalize emotions as well as her other psychosocially dysfunctional qualities due to observing her own parents' behaviors. Jamie has acknowledged her difficulty of controlling her behaviors and wants to try and sustain a relationship with a peer; however, Jamie feels rejected, lost, and abandoned when a peer denies her a chance to prove herself. A child's social interactions with their parents and peers play a significant role in their cognitive development.

According to Vygotsky, Jamie's cognitive development may be delayed due to her sociocultural factors. Parts of Jamie's development can be explained by Vygotsky's research and theory.

3. Identify factors that could have influenced Jamie's **physical well-being** during the prenatal, birth, and early childhood stages of development.

Many factors could have influenced Jamie's physical well-being during the prenatal, birth, and early childhood stages of development. For example, a mother's use of drugs and alcohol can have negative effects on their child during the prenatal and birth periods. Jamie's mother, Judi, has an excessive drinking problem that could have impacted Jamie. Alcohol can effect fetal development in numerous ways, such as disrupting the normal process of neuronal migration, neuronal death or impaired function of glial cells (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, pp. 101-102). Neuronal migration is when the neurons travel to their final position in the brain, and if the process is interfered with, the child may have both physical and mental impairments. Alcohol, if consumed in large quantities, can be the cause of fetal alcohol syndrome in a newborn. A newborn who has FAS has "... noticeable physical symptoms such as a small head and distinctive facial abnormalities including thin upper lip, short nose, and flat midface" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 102). Jamie's mother has a history of excessive drinking and if she drank excessively during pregnancy she could have caused physical impairments to Jamie. Judi's environment while she was pregnant with Jamie could have also affected Jamie's physical well-being. For example, exposure to radiation and pollutants can effect a child. Radiation from X-rays and other objects that have radiation can cause "... mutations, spontaneous abortions, and a variety of birth defects..." (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 106). Pollutants, such as lead, can cause a child to be born prematurely and have a smaller birth weight (Sigelman, & Rider, 2017). If Judi's mother were exposed to radiation and/or pollutants, she could have harmed Judi's physical development. The state Jamie's mother was in when she was pregnant could affect Jamie's physical well-being as well. For example, if Judi was 20 years old or younger when pregnant with Jamie; she had an increased risk of birth complications such as premature delivery and stillbirth (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 107). On the other hand, if Jamie's mother was 35 years old or older; she had an increased risk of having a miscarriage, stillbirth, and low-birth-weight baby (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 107). Judi's age when she had Jamie influenced Jamie's development and chance of survival. The amount of resources Jamie's mother had such as prenatal care, could have affected Jamie's physical well-being positively or negatively. If Judi were unable to obtain prenatal vitamins and go to the doctor regularly to check on Jamie's development, Jamie would be more likely to develop a physical impairment. Also, considering Judi has a history of inattention to good health practices and severe psychosocial trauma, her emotional condition may have impacted Jamie's physical well-being. If Jamie's mother were highly stressed during her pregnancy, it was more likely that Jamie would be smaller, more active, and more prone to crying (Sigelman, & Rider, 2017, p. 109). Although many factors could be causing Jamie's maladaptive behavior, it is difficult to know for sure without more information about the physical state/characteristics of the mother when she was pregnant. For example, diseases (diabetes, HIV, etc.) and genetic disorders (down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, etc.), could be transmitted from the mother to Jamie during pregnancy. Alcohol, radiation, pollutants, the mother's age, the resources available, and the mother's emotional state all could have influenced Jamie's physical well-being.

4. Identify factors that could have influenced Jamie's **cognitive well-being** during the prenatal, birth, and early childhood stages of development.

Many factors could have influenced Jamie's cognitive well-being during the prenatal, birth, and early childhood stages of development. A factor that could have influenced Jamie's cognitive well-being is alcohol. Alcohol, if consumed in large quantities, can be the cause of fetal alcohol syndrome in a newborn. Newborns who have FAS, "... are likely to display excessive irritability, hyperactivity, seizures, or tremors. Most children with FAS score well below average on IQ tests throughout childhood and adolescence, and many also exhibit hyperactive behavior and attention deficits" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 102). If Jamie has FAS, due to her mother's excessive drinking, it could explain why she has attention-deficit issues and gets angry easily. A mother's exposure to different pollutants, toxins, and pesticides can also effect their child's cognitive well-being. For example, exposure to mercury while pregnant can cause "... delayed development and memory, attention, and language problems..." in the child (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 106). A mother's exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and bisphenol-A (BPA) can also create learning difficulties and hyperactivity in the child. Jamie's attention-deficit issues could have been caused by her mother's exposure to toxins or pesticides. The physical and emotional states of the mother can also affect the child's cognitive well-being. The amount of resources Jamie's mother had, such as quality of prenatal care and nutrition, could have affected Jamie's cognitive well-being positively or negatively. Considering Judi has a history of inattention to good health practices and severe psychosocial trauma, her emotional condition may have impacted Jamie's physical well-being. If Jamie's mother were highly stressed during her pregnancy, it would be more likely that Jamie would be irritable and have an increased chance of being diagnosed with schizophrenia (Sigelman, & Rider, 2017, p. 109). Alcohol, pollutants, toxins, pesticides, the amount of resources available, and the emotional state of the mother are all factors that could have influenced Jamie's cognitive well-being.

5. Identify factors that could have influenced Jamie's **psychosocial well-being** during the early and middle childhood stages of development.

The factors that could have influenced Jamie's psychosocial well-being during the early and middle childhood stages of development are social support, loneliness, bereavement, and school environment. Jamie did not receive sufficient social support due to her mother's history of excessive drinking, inattention to good health practices, and severe psychosocial trauma. Jamie may have needed social support with school and relationships, but her mom may have been unavailable. Jamie's mother did show social support to Jamie by seeking the support she desperately needs. If Jamie were lonely during her early and middle childhood stages of development it could negatively impact her psychosocial well-being. Jamie's negative relationship with her peers could have been a consequence of her loneliness because she was not taught how to interact with others and sustain healthy relationships. Bereavement also could have influenced Jamie's psychosocial well-being because Jamie's mother may have been emotionally detached from Jamie after the death of her other daughter. If Jamie knows about the death of her sister or remembers her sister when she was alive would affect her psychosocial well-being. Jamie's school environment positively influenced Jamie's psychosocial well-being. Jamie's teachers were aware of Jamie's maladaptive behaviors, and instead of ignoring her behaviors, they referred her to the school psychologist. After meeting with the

school psychologist, Jamie's mother was then aware, or more aware, of Jamie's behavior and was able to decide to seek the treatment she needs. Many factors during Jamie's early and middle childhood stages of development influenced her psychosocial well-being.

6. Evaluate the **sociocultural factors** that could contribute to Jamie's maladaptive behavior.

The sociocultural factors that could contribute to Jamie's maladaptive behavior are a weakened sense of family support, quality of education and healthcare, and her culture. Jamie's weekend sense of family support may have contributed to her maladaptive behavior. Jamie's father is not in the picture and both her mother and she lost a family member (daughter/sister). It is unclear from the case study if Jamie or her mother has other family members to turn to for support (or if Judi's sister, Jan, is a source of support). If a person does not have a support system they will be more likely to act out and express their emotions in unhealthy ways. If Jamie was unable to talk to her mother about her thoughts and feelings, it may explain why she has a difficult time regulating her emotions and has angry outbursts. The quality of education and healthcare may also contribute to Jamie's maladaptive behavior. Not receiving good quality healthcare can lead a person to have poorer physical and mental health. Jamie's struggles with anxiety, depression, and attention deficit issues could get worse if she does not have good quality healthcare, or if she has poor quality healthcare. Another sociocultural factor is Jamie's culture. Some cultures may view more aggressive children, like Jamie, in a more positive way than others. For example, "In Japan, a collectivist culture in which children are taught early to value social harmony, children are less angered by interpersonal conflicts and less likely to react to them aggressively than American children are" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 423). Other cultures may handle emotions in different ways too. Some may teach children that venting and letting out their emotions is okay in certain situations and others may teach children that venting is not okay, and they need to control their emotions. Considering Jamie expresses her emotions through angry outbursts, she may have a culture that is more accepting of people expressing their emotions through venting. Jamie's maladaptive behavior could have been contributed by many sociocultural factors.

7. Explain why it is important to consider the **physical, cognitive, and psychosocial factors** in combination (versus separately) throughout the life span when evaluating an individual's well-being.

It is important to consider the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial factors in combination throughout the life span when evaluating an individual's well-being because healthcare professionals will have an easier time discovering physical and mental health problems. Acknowledging the factors in combination in early childhood can possibly help understand an individual's well-being later in life. For example, we see how Judi's abusive childhood has impacted her parenting with Jamie. Judi passed many of her psychosocially dysfunctional qualities on to Jamie. Now she sees how Jamie is struggling to regulate her emotions and is having attention-deficit issues similar to what Judi had when she was young living in her abusive environment. As Judi and Jamie grow older, they can both look back at their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial factors that have played a role in their well-being. Their history's can help understand new mental or physical problems as well as ongoing problems. For example, if Jamie is in her 20s and still has attention-deficit issues and/or anger issues, a healthcare professional can view her history of treatment (assuming the support Judi found for Jamie when she was 9 years old was unsuccessful) and try to find a new treatment that may help her stay focused and/or regulate her emotions more. On the other hand, if Judi found a

successful support system and treatment for Jamie when she was 9 years old, but then her issues with attention-deficit and/or anger returns, a healthcare professional can go back and see what treatment helped Jamie when she was younger and try to build off of it and see if it works. An individual's physical, cognitive, and psychosocial factors contribute to their well-being as well as their happiness. Prior to this case study, we saw the lives of Judi and Jan. Judi's negative environment led her to barely graduate high school, be unable to sustain employment, abuse alcohol and drugs, and be in psychologically abusive situations. Her environment caused her to have physical problems (from the drugs and alcohol), cognitive problems (difficulty in school and employment) and psychosocial problems (from her abusive parents and toxic relationships). All of the factors intertwined and dramatically decreased Judi's well-being. On the other hand, Jan's positive environment led her to be successful in school, employment, and relationships. Jan would have better physical health (no use of drugs or alcohol), good cognitive health (good grades in high school and went to law school), and good psychosocial factors (sustaining healthy relationships with others). All the factors intertwine and effect one another. Jan's good physical health impacted her good cognitive skills, as well as her good psychosocial abilities. After comparing Jan's and Judi's lives, it is safe to conclude that Jan would be happier than Judi due to her healthy and positive well-being. Physical, cognitive, and psychosocial factors influence one another and determine an individual's levels of well-being and happiness.

8. Describe the **research or theory** that best explains Jamie's behavior. Explain your response.

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory best explains Jamie's behavior. His social cognitive theory states that "... humans are cognitive beings whose active processing of information plays a critical role in their learning, behavior, and development" (Sigelman & Rider, 2017, p. 43). According to Bandura, children may learn and/or reinforce their aggressive behaviors by observing the people around them. Jamie could have learned some of her aggressive behaviors from watching her mother or her peers. Considering Judi's abusive past, she may have had a hard time regulating her own emotions and passed down the behavior to Jamie. Another reason for being aggressive is from having interpersonal violence within oneself. Jamie has difficulty regulating her emotions due to her anger stemming from feelings of shame and guilt. Jamie can learn to regulate her emotions by observing people who are good at controlling their emotions and do not express aggressive behavior. Jamie's aggressive behavior has interfered with her cognitive development considering her teacher was concerned and referred her to the school psychologist. Jamie's aggressive behavior towards her peers and herself would make it difficult for her to retain new information she learns in school. The best theory that explains Jamie's behavior is Bandura's social cognitive theory.

References:

Sigelman C. K., & Rider E. A. (2017). *Life-Span Human Development*. [MBS Direct]. Retrieved from <https://mbsdirect.vitalsource.com/#/books/9781337516068/>