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Developmental tasks of university students: A scholarly examination of evolving patterns and implications

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Abstract

Each individual will go through a period of early adult development characterized by various types of life demands that are different from the previous stages. When entering early adulthood, individuals are required to explore careers, start careers, invest in self-development, start family life and optimize life skills needed to achieve success. This study aims to describe the achievements of student development tasks in early adulthood which include aspects of religious life foundation, ethical behavior foundation, emotional foundation, intellectual foundation, responsibility awareness, social role as a man or woman, self-acceptance and development, economic behavioral independence, career insight and preparation, maturity of relationships with peers, and self-preparation for marriage and family life. The method used in research is quantitative descriptive with survey research design. Data collection is carried out with the Developmental Task Inventory (ITP) instrument which is then analyzed using a Development Task Analysis (ATP) application. The research sample consisted of 68 students. The results showed that the average level of developmental tasks was 6.71, which indicates the developmental level of individuality. From the results obtained, each aspect has a different level of development. However, these different levels do not mean that one level is better than the other. An overview of the results of all aspects can be taken into consideration in evaluating and designing strategies to optimize student development.

Keywords: *Tasks, Development, Student.*

INTRODUCTION

The early adulthood phase represents a critical period in the life course of individuals. This phase demands active engagement in career exploration, initiation of professional pursuits, investment in higher education, and the deliberation of romantic choices. The overarching objective is to attain a mature adulthood characterized by academic achievements, career establishment, and familial responsibilities (Beckmeyer & Jamison, 2023). Early adulthood is further distinguished by an escalated propensity for risk-taking behaviors (Edelson & Reyna, 2023) and the reinforcement of self-control as a pivotal developmental task (Christie-Mizell, Hearne, Talbert, & Frazier, 2023).

Upon entering the early adulthood phase at the age of 18-25, individuals typically transition into the role of a university student, embarking on the journey to assume responsibilities, engage in employment, and actively participate in societal life (Pratiwi & Arumhapsari, 2019; Putri, 2019). Students, far beyond being mere agents of change, also serve as role models in a community grounded in knowledge, education, norms, and their cognitive patterns. A student is defined as an individual pursuing higher education, whether in private or public institutions (Siswoyo, 2007; Hartaji, 2012).

Throughout their developmental trajectory, students undergo distinct stages referred to as developmental phases. Each developmental stage entails specific developmental tasks that must be fulfilled by students to avoid hindering the accomplishment of other developmental tasks. One such developmental task for students is transitioning into early

adulthood, necessitating the departure from late adolescence. This transition is supported by various functional aspects such as physical, psychological, and social changes (Hulukati & Djibran, 2018). Examining student characteristics, they exhibit a heightened focus on career development and a firmer commitment to exploring identity compared to early adolescence (Santrock, 2008).

Developmental tasks represent a process illustrating the social and psychological behaviors of human life within an educational or societal context. These tasks can also be construed as obligations that individuals must fulfill within specific phases or periods. Successful completion of these tasks brings happiness, while failure may result in disappointment and societal censure, either from family or the surrounding environment (Havighurst, 1961). Additionally, developmental tasks encompass attitudes, behaviors, and skills that ideally should be mastered and accomplished in accordance with the developmental phase (Danim, 2013).

Individuals inevitably undergo their developmental tasks from childhood, adolescence, adulthood to old age. There are several developmental tasks that must be navigated to ensure a fulfilling life and avoid significant problems, particularly for early adults, as early adulthood represents the zenith of development for each individual (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020; Hapsari et al., 2023). Adulthood is the phase where an individual has completed their growth and is ready to assume their role in society alongside other adults (Hurlock, 1996).

Early adulthood spans from approximately 18 years to around 40 years, during which physical and psychological changes occur alongside a decline in reproductive abilities (Hurlock, 1996). This period involves adapting to new life patterns and social expectations. Early adults are expected to take on new roles such as spouse, parent, breadwinner, embracing new desires, developing new attitudes, and adhering to new values in alignment with their new responsibilities (Hurlock, 1996).

In general, individual developmental tasks stem from factors such as physical maturity, societal and cultural demands, personal aspirations, and religious norms. The developmental tasks of early adulthood can be delineated as follows (Hurlock, 2009):

a. Attaining employment
b. Choosing a life partner
c. Learning to live with a spouse and forming a family
d. Having and responsibly raising children
e. Managing household affairs
f. Assuming responsibilities as a citizen
g. Finding and participating in social groups.

In addition to developmental tasks, individuals also undergo ego development (Hy & Loevinger, 1996). Ego development is delineated as follows.

Tabel 1

Nc	Level	Characteristics		
		Impulse Control	Interpersonal Mode	Conscious Preoccupations
1	Impulsive	Impulsive	Egocentric, dependent	Bodily feelings
2	Self-Protective	Opportunistic	Manipulative, wary	“Trouble”, control
3	Conformist	Respect for rules	Cooperative, loyal	Appearances, behavior
4	Self-Aware	Exceptions allowable	Helpful, self-aware	Feelings, problems, adjustment
5	Conscientious	Self-evaluated standards, self-critical	Intense, responsible	Motives, traits, achievements
6	Individualistic	Tolerant	Mutual	Individuality, development, roles
7	Autonomous	Coping wig conflict	Interdependent	Self-fulfilment, psychological causation
8	Integrated		Cherishing individuality	Identity

From the aforementioned conceptualization, Kartadinata (2003)

concludes that developmental tasks are categorized into 11 distinct facets, as follows:

a. Foundations of religious life
b. Foundations of ethical behavior
c. Foundations of emotional well-being
d. Foundations of intellectual development
e. Awareness of responsibility
f. Social roles as a man or woman
g. Self-acceptance and personal development
h. Independence in economic behavior
i. Insight and career preparation
j. Maturity in relationships with peers k. Preparation for marriage and family life

The developmental tasks are specifically geared towards cultivating attitudes and striving to attain mature behavioral capabilities. For students, the process of adapting to the university environment or engaging in social adjustment is undeniably intricate, as it represents an individual's capacity or competence to react effectively and beneficially to the demands of reality, situations, and social relationships (Schneiders, 1964). Furthermore, undertaking developmental tasks to adapt to the university environment is no facile undertaking, as numerous challenges confront them. Among the issues they cite are difficulties in completing academic tasks, challenges in forming relationships with peers, apprehensions about interacting with professors, struggles in self-development, and an unfamiliarity with the applied academic regulations.

Based on the foregoing exposition, it can be inferred that the developmental tasks of early adulthood are linked to personal issues, emotional tension, and issues of self-doubt. In the initial phase of this period, the developmental tasks accomplished tend to become increasingly arduous. Achieving developmental objectives in early adulthood is a universal aspiration. Moreover, students greatly depend on the role of academic advisors to assist them in both academic and non-academic learning processes, enabling them to successfully navigate the educational journey in higher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey design. Descriptive research entails the examination of existing conditions without delving into the analysis of relationships among variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2023). The survey design refers to quantitative research procedures wherein the researcher conducts surveys or administers questionnaires to a sample or population to describe attitudes, behaviors, opinions, or characteristics (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In this research, a questionnaire was distributed to 78 respondents from the Undergraduate Program in Primary School Teacher Education (S1 PGSD) at UPI Campus Tasikmalaya for the Academic Year 2023/2024. The instrument employed was the Developmental Tasks Inventory (ITP), subsequently analyzed using the Developmental Tasks Analysis (ATP) application version 3.5.0. The ITP was developed by Kartadinata et al. (2003) to assess the achievement of developmental tasks among students.

The ATP provides insights into the individual's developmental level and aids students in self-understanding to effectively address their developmental tasks for optimal growth. This inventory comprises 77 items covering religious, ethical, emotional, intellectual, responsibility, social roles as a man or woman, self-acceptance and development, economic behavior, career preparation, maturity in relationships with peers, and preparation for marriage and family life. The data collected were processed using the ATP application, generating an overview of the respondents' developmental status. Subsequently, the data were presented

in tabular form, followed by descriptive analysis and linkage to established developmental theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following presents the group tendencies derived from individuals who have completed the instrument. Table 2 illustrates the outcomes of the application processing.

Table 2
Profile of Student Group Data: An In-Depth Analysis of Collective Student Characteristics

No	Aspect	Developmental Levels: A Comprehensive Analysis of Progress and Maturation
1	Foundations of Religious Existence: An Examination of Spiritual Groundings	6,84
2	Foundations of Ethical Behavior: Exploring the Underpinnings of Moral Conduct	6,54
3	Emotional Maturity: An In-depth Exploration of Emotional Development	6,41
4	Intellectual Maturity: Unraveling the Dimensions of Cognitive Development	6,4
5	Consciousness of Responsibility: An In-Depth Analysis of Accountability Awareness	6,86
6	Social Roles as Men or Women: Examining Gendered Responsibilities and Expectations	6,97
7	Self-Acceptance and Its Development: Exploring the Dynamics of Personal Acknowledgment and Growth	6,88
8	Economic Behavioral Independence: An In-depth Inquiry into Financial Autonomy	6,91
9	Insight and Career Preparation: A Comprehensive Exploration of Vocational Vision and Readiness	6,74
10	Interpersonal Maturity in Peer Relationships: Examining the Depth of Connections with Peers	6,71
11	Preparation for Marriage and Family Life: A Comprehensive Examination of Readiness and Planning for Conjugal and Familial Commitments	6,53

The average consistency score from the Developmental Tasks Analysis (ATP) is 7.73 out of 11, signifying that the respondents' consistency is commendable. This indicates that the respondents approached the inventory seriously, and the obtained results are accountable. The average developmental level of 6.71 implies that, collectively, the group's developmental stage is at an individuality

level. This suggests that individuals have experienced an increase in awareness of individuality, possess emotional awareness, exhibit greater tolerance towards oneself and others, recognize individual differences, distinguish internal and external aspects of life, and are acquainted with self-complexity. The elaboration of each aspect is as follows.

1. Foundations of religious life
   The developmental level of religious life foundations is 6.84, indicating an individuality level. Religion encompasses commendable human behavior undertaken to gain Allah's approval. It involves the totality of human behavior grounded in faith in Allah, shaping virtuous character habits ingrained in personal conduct. Therefore, religious character is crucial for students in confronting contemporary changes or moral degradation. Consequently, students are expected to comport themselves based on the religious norms and regulations, exhibiting ethical or unethical behavior. Religious values serve as the primary foundation in human life and education. The erosion of religious values from society, as noted by Nurihsan (2017, 34), can contribute to the decline of a nation.
2. Foundations of ethical behavior The developmental level of ethical behavior foundations is 6.54, indicative of an individuality level. Ethical behavior, synonymous with ethics, is highly significant for students, especially as they are perceived by society as educated individuals. As ethical individuals, students must demonstrate courtesy and politeness to everyone and everything. Ethical behavior is influenced by intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and locus of control (Novius & Lusiawati, 2023).
3. Foundations of emotional well-being The developmental level of emotional well-being foundations is 6.41, positioning at the individuality level. Emotionality is a manifestation of emotions themselves and encompasses everything related to expressing emotional feelings. Emotional responses can be stimulated or provoked, and this emotional condition is an integral part of an individual. In terms of intelligence, emotional intelligence is related to the ability to self-motivate, resilience in facing difficulties, emotional control, and control of mental states (Aini, Setiono & Nugroho, 2023). Emotional intelligence is crucial in education for developing a child with high intellectual intelligence and, simultaneously, a highly humane individual with elevated emotional intelligence.
4. Foundations of intellectual development The developmental level of intellectual development foundations is 6.40, indicating an individuality level. Students represent intellectual miniatures of society, displaying diversity in thoughts, ideas, and creative concepts to fulfill the Triple Mission of Higher Education: education and teaching, research, and community service. Students must generate intelligent and solution-oriented ideas to address societal issues. Intellectual development can be achieved through problem-solving and decision-making training (Ahmad & Hartati, 2016).
5. Responsibility Awareness
   The level of developmental awareness of responsibility is 6.86, indicating an

individuality level. Awareness of responsibility encourages individuals to act more cautiously with mature decisions, ensuring successful task completion. Possessing a sense of responsibility garners societal appreciation, as individuals become accountable for their assigned tasks and avoid neglecting them. Students bear various responsibilities, such as attending lectures promptly, completing studies ahead of schedule, adhering to campus regulations outlined in the Student Code of Ethics, and maintaining campus orderliness. Developing student responsibility, particularly in learning, can be achieved through group guidance using self-management techniques (Heriansyah & Kurniawan, 2017) and reality group counseling (Juita, Susanti & Permatasari, 2021).

6. Social Roles as Men and Women
   The developmental level of social roles as men and women is 6.97, positioned at an individuality level. Both men and women play dual roles in society. Gender pertains to societal perceptions regarding an individual's role, behavior, expression, and identity, encompassing both males and females. Gender is closely associated with masculine and feminine terms. Addressing gender disparity in education is imperative to prevent the marginalization of women in this domain. Gender equality, also a goal within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is essential in the education sector for women to have equal opportunities as men. Social media serves as a bridge for sharing information and raising awareness in gender-based development (Anindya, Hanana & Elian, 2021).
7. Self-Acceptance and Development
   The developmental level of self-acceptance is 6.84, situated at the individuality level. Self-acceptance, also known as self-acceptance, is an individual's ability to acknowledge their existence. Students today have a sense of self-acceptance, fostering positive attitudes toward themselves, leading to tranquility, self-awareness, and recognition by others. Students can enhance self-acceptance by accepting themselves as they are, spending time getting to know themselves, disregarding negative opinions, embracing feedback from close individuals, paying attention to every small aspect of personal development, and avoiding comparisons with others. Self-acceptance is related to the quarter-life crisis; high self-acceptance correlates with low quarter-life crisis, while low self-acceptance correlates with high quarter-life crisis (Putri & Fahmawati, 2023).
8. Independence in Economic Behavior
   The developmental level of independence in economic behavior is 6.91, situated at the individuality level. Independence in economic behavior involves a commitment to seeking opportunities in facing life challenges. This independence is related to life values such as diligence, frugality, competitiveness, and earnestness to achieve financial autonomy. Independence is reflected in optimizing potential, demonstrating perseverance, and productively competing to achieve financial independence. Entrepreneurial activities, cooperative learning, and entrepreneurship knowledge can foster

entrepreneurial behavior (Dama, Toralawe & Mahmud, 2023).

9. Insight and Career Preparation
   The developmental level of insight and career preparation is 6.84, situated at the individuality level. Insight and career readiness for students involve planning to develop their potential in the professional field. Students can enhance their potential by studying more diligently, participating in student exchanges, building relationships with individuals who can facilitate their potential development, and identifying priorities in developing and initiating their careers. Career counseling can be provided to enhance career adaptability, personal development perceptions, and professional skills improvement (Carvalho, L., Mourão, L., & Freitas, C., 2023).
10. Relationship Maturity with Peers
    The level of relationship maturity with peers is 6.71, positioned at the individuality level. Peer relationships, or social interactions, involve connections between individuals in a group with similar age and maturity levels, characterized by mutual interest, attention, and mutual influence. Peer groups significantly influence self-image, and students become closer to their peers, believing that peers understand their desires, leading them to spend time with their friends. Peer influence is vital in the imitation process of personality formation, where peers act as advisors, motivators, and models providing guidance, admonition, and direction. Relationship maturity with peers is linked to an individual's social and personality aspects, as posited by Erik Erikson in the social development stages, where around the age of 11-16, individuals experience identity search and peer influence is potent during this phase (Santrok, 2008).
11. Self-Preparation for Marriage and Family
    Life The level of self-preparation for marriage and family life is 6.53, positioned at the individuality level. Students not only fulfill their roles as learners but also must meet their developmental tasks as adults by preparing for marriage and family life. Marriage is a union to unite two vastly different individuals physically, psychologically, and in their personal backgrounds. In this context, marriage involves not only marrying the person one loves but also marrying into their family and environment (Sonia, 2020). Marriage readiness is crucial for both men and women to achieve a prosperous family life (Mawaddah et al., 2019). When individuals are ready for marriage, they must also consider the attitudes and traits of their partners, such as emotional management, empathy, social skills, social cognition, role readiness, sexual readiness, age, financial stability, communication skills, and tolerance.

CONCLUSION

Students are tasked with developmental assignments based on the developmental tasks of early adulthood. These developmental tasks encompass periods of emotional turmoil and tension, as well as self-discovery. According to the Developmental Task Inventory (DTI), there are eleven aspects of developmental tasks, namely religious foundation, ethical behavioral foundation, emotional foundation, intellectual foundation, awareness of responsibility, gender role in society, self-acceptance and development, economic behavioral independence, insight and career preparation, maturity in peer

relationships, and preparation for marriage and family life.

Through an analysis of 78 students, an average developmental level of 6.71 was obtained, indicating a level of individualization. Each aspect exhibited a different level of development. These varying levels do not imply that one is superior to another. All aspects should be subject to evaluation and follow-up actions to enhance their developmental levels beyond the existing ones, achieving optimal development

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