

Field Experience Paper 2

Introduction:

For this assignment, I decided to interview someone I've known for a long time, named Martha. Martha is an old lady who is a family friend, she is roughly about 60 years old. She was born in Mexico and later on came to the United States, therefore, she has many experiences of her life in Mexico and the US. She has 3 kids, all around the same age, 30, 32, and 35. She now lives with one of her sons after her husband passed away a couple of years ago. She has many joyful events in life in comparison to some of her more challenging moments, like losing her husband. The interview allowed me to get to know and understand her better than I already did.

Erikson's Integrity vs Despair:

Erikson's Integrity vs. Despair is a theory in late adulthood where someone might look back at all their life experiences and determine if they regret their past action or if they believe that they have lived a great life. I had to ask M many questions about her past, like "looking back in life, how have you felt about most of your past life decisions?", "Do you regret anything you've done in life?". She responded by saying that at the moment she had those decisions, she probably had some regrets like "not traveling more and having kids at the time she did," but she ultimately thought that they were the best decisions she's had throughout her life. Looking back, she says that she would've made the same decisions she did if she were to have to make them again. Her responses align with the theory because she is reminiscing about past events and determining regrets in life. And when I first asked about her past experiences, it looked like she experienced a sense of joy when answering all the questions, meaning she takes pride in doing what she did and living how she did with no regrets later in life.

Selective Optimization with Compensation:

Selective Optimization with Compensation is one of the other theories/strategies I observed and evaluated whenever I was asking questions to Martha. Selective Optimization with Compensation is the strategy where older adults are required to adapt and change certain actions/hobbies or routines because they can't do it anymore due to health issues, aging, and other factors that come with getting older. The strategy consists of 3 components: selection, optimization, and compensation. Selection consists of picking something that is most important to you. Optimization is making the most of your strengths and investing time and effort in these areas. Finally, there is compensation, which involves finding new hobbies and adapting to the limitations you have by finding new stuff to do. During the interview, I asked questions that connect to this strategy, such as, what are your hobbies, what stuff have you picked up to do in late adulthood, and what

do you enjoy doing that you can't do anymore? She had a lot of stuff she enjoyed doing, like playing soccer with her kids and later with her grandchildren, taking her kids and grandchildren to school. She then said she had to change that because of her old age, she wasn't as physically fit to do stuff like driving or even physical activities, which is why she had to change those activities into something she was actually able to do. She adapted and changed her hobbies to reading them books or watching movies with them, which connected to the strategy because it shows how she adapted because she needed to.

Socioemotional Selectivity Theory:

Another theory that connects to the answers provided by Martha is the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory. The theory is that as you age, you tend to focus more on some relationships rather than all of the ones you already have. Many people change goals and values, which is why people often drift apart since they don't have the same needs and wants in life. And rather than meeting new people, they would rather reinforce the relationships they already have instead of making new ones. Some of the questions that showed this theory when I asked were, Are you still friends with the people you were when you were younger, and Who are you closest to in life, and why? The answers I got were "I'm not, i just have a small circle of friends who I did know when we were younger, but not everyone I used to know," and "im most closest to my family, so my kids, grandchildren, and my siblings" It shows that there is no point in wasting time on new relationships when older and how many people lose connections with friends because they prioritize those who are closer like family or super close friends. "I spend time with those who are important to me and focus less on the drama that comes with having too many friends" is one of the responses that stuck out the most because it shows the importance of the theory.

Erikson's Generativity vs. Stagnation:

The final concept that comes to mind with the interview is Erikson's Generativity vs. Stagnation. Generativity refers to contributing to the next generation, for example, Martha teaching her grandchildren new things. Stagnation is the complete opposite of generativity, meaning that people feel stuck and as if they didn't contribute to something, some doing it on purpose by just focusing on themselves, and others do it just by accident. During the interview, Martha proudly explained how she taught her grandchildren how to read or taught them Spanish. She is proud of how she contributed to the next generation by teaching her grandchildren new and important stuff that can better their lives. After she retired, she spent more time with her grandchildren by taking care of them and teaching them stuff. It shows how there

was generativity in her life by contributing to something meaningful for her. She showed feelings opposite to those of stagnation, which is the opposite of what she did (generativity).

Summary:

Interviewing Martha shows many concepts that show up in everyday life. It gave me a deeper understanding of how they work and occur without even trying. Through the interview, there were concepts like Erikson's Generativity vs. Stagnation, Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, and many more. Through her responses, I understood how people adapt to uncontrollable changes and how they think about their past experiences and reflect upon them. The interview not only taught me more about Martha but also reinforced what I already knew about these theories and concepts.