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| **Some possible evaluation point for explanation of gender** | | | | | |  | |
| **Chromosome and hormones** | **Cognitive-Kohlberg** | **Cognitive-gender schema** | **Psychodynamic** | **SLT** | **Culture** | **Media** | |
| **Issues and debates** | | | | | | | |
| **Nature**  **BUT** there aren’t these distinct diff between the sexes. Macoby-(19720 more differences within sexes than between  -Can’t explain changes over time and across culture as gender should be fixed and permanent if biological.  -interactionalist is more useful | **Gender bias –beta**  Minimises differences between boys and girls. Says they will have same gender identity but its proven boys are more rigid in their concept of gender roles so this must be a social/cultural rather than cognitive which Kohlberg can’t explain. | **Nature/nurture**  cognitive and social factors in the development of schemas so support for the nurture side of the debate and compliments other explanations such as the social learning theory and cultural influences on gender. Furthermore, understanding environmental influences on gender schemas can help us to reduce gender stereotypes within society. | **Determinist**  It is saying that you WILL identify with the same sex parent and you WILL identify with them but what about those who don’t? There is an element of freewill in who a child chooses to identify with, may be of the opposite sex, may be a sibling, may be on tele so not a full explanation. | **Nurture**  But-can’t explain cases like Batista family, clearly not socialisation here.  -Interactionalism is more useful. | **Cultural bias**  **Imposed etic-**western researchers traditionally carry out cultural research and there is the danger that the methods are developed in own culture and imposed on cultures being observed resulting in misinterpretations of behaviour and reducing validity of conclusions. | **Nurture**  Same as for SLT, over emphasises nurture in the role of media on gender roles. Obviously isn’t just media, and social factors. What about David Reimer?  Media does has it’s place but on a total explanation. | |
| **Research evidence** | | | | | | | |
| **Batista family or David Reimer-**  So what- The fact that despite being socialised as a female they still choose to become male shows that biology here is more important than the environment in gender development. As they still felt male despite the environmental factors supports the idea of the brain being masculinised by testosterone in the womb. | Contradicts Supports  **Martin and Little (1990) in pack**  Kohlberg-contradicts as the children here are at gender identity and Kohlberg says they have to be at gender constancy and to be able to stereo-type so ages of his stages are wrong.  Support GST as it can explain what Kohlberg can’t-children that young has stereotypes as all the theory says they need to be able to do it label gender which directly supports. | | **Friedman (1952) supports the idea of the Oedipus and electra complexes and** the idea that both sexes have more attraction to the opposite-sex parent and more hostility towards the same-sex parent, as they are sad that the same sex parent who is a rival is impacting on their time with the object of their affection. | **Fagot & Leinbach (1995)** found that four-year-olds displayed more gender role stereotyping and used gender labels earlier in ‘traditional’ families where the dad worked and mum cared for the children at home than in ‘alternative’ families where parents shared childcare.  This supports the view that parents’ gender role behaviour influences their child’s gender development because the “traditional” children have observed these gender stereotypical roles thus impacting on their stereotyping much more than children observing non-traditional roles. | Remember for these essays the ao1 is NOT explanations for culture research from Mead and for media research on impact of TV so evaluation is going to be more general points. | | |
| Supports  **Slaby & Frey (1975)** in pack  suggests that high gender constancy leads to children watching their own gender to acquire information about gender appropriate behaviour, supporting Kohlberg’s theory that children who reach gender constancy seek to behave in a gender appropriate way | **Martin & Halverson (1983)** so supports GST as supports the idea that children distort information so that it fits with their existing schemas and also supports the part of theory that says children only focus on in group behaviour ignoring out group. | **Barry et al (1957)** found that in non-Western cultures, nurturing was regarded as a predominantly female characteristic, while self-reliance was regarded as a predominantly male characteristic. As these findings reflect western views of gender roles, they suggest that gender roles have a **biological basis. So reduces the impact that culture has on gender.** | | **Application**  If we are aware that media exposure to gender role stereotypes increases potentially limiting sex-role stereotypical behaviour in children, then, as a society, we have to ability to control this exposure and remedy the problem. Johnston & Ettema (1982), showed 12-year-old children a television programme designed to counter gender stereotypes, and found that both sexes showed reduced gender stereotyping, supporting the view that the research can be used in a positive way.  **LINK BACK OR IRRELEVANT**  So the fact that the explanation leads to such potentially important applications is a strength of the explanation. However, not all the research in this area supports the view that counter stereotyping in successful in reducing stereotypical behaviour. |
| **General strengths/weaknesses of research (explanations and studies)** | | | | | | | |
| **Extrapolation-**  research in this area is conducted on animals because we are more able to manipulate animals’ hormone levels, due to less constraints, and this makes it easier to measure their effect on behaviour. However, there may be a problem with our ability to generalise the results of animal studies to humans, as the brain functioning of animals is much more simplistic than it is for humans. Humans behaviour is influenced by culture and socialisation, and therefore we may find that hormones have less of an influence over our behaviour.  **LINK BACK OR IRRELEVANT**  **So this** is a weakness of the role of chromosomes and hormones explanation of gender development. | **Validity of the research**  interviews with children who were, in some cases, as young as two or three.  +ve- the questions asked were tailored to that particular group  But –ve- not acknowledged that very young children often lack the vocabulary to express their views adequately.  -ve young children really want to please adults so the style of question may mean they just gave the answer they thought the researcher wanted to hear.  **LINK BACK OR IRRELEVANT**  **So** some of the research that supports Kohlberg’s theory could lack internal validity which reduces the overall support for the theory. | **Explains what other theories can’t**  The emphasis on selective attention means that the theory can account for the fact that young children tend to hold very fixed and rigid gender attitudes even in the face of **contradictory evidence which explanations like social learning theory can’t explain.** This is because the contradictory evidence is likely to be ignored if it doesn’t fit with the child’s schema. It also explains why sometimes children continue to cling to stereotypical beliefs and behaviours even when attempts are made by parents and teachers and the media to break them down. | **Temporal validity**  **One issue with the psychodynamic explanation is that it provides an unsupported explanation for gender development in non-nuclear families. Freuds theory relies on the child having two parents of different genders so they are able to resolve the Oedipus and Electra complex effectively. It would therefore be logical to assume that based on Freuds theory children living in non-nuclear families would have an adverse effect on the child’s gender development however evidence does not support this assumption. For example Golombok demonstrated how children from single-parent families went on to develop normal gender identities. Therefore the psychodynamic explanation could be criticised for not being able to explain gender development in the 21st century.’** | **Under-emphasises the role of peers**  Social learning theory places most emphasis on the role of the parents in shaping children’s gender role behaviour, but evidence suggests that peers have a larger role to play, particularly as the child gets older. This may explain why, even when parents attempt not to gender role stereotype, the child still sticks rigidly to gender role behaviour. Therefore it may be that the theory exaggerates the influence of parents in gender role development which reduces the support for the SLT explanation. | **Hard to separate nature and nurture**  So is it culture or biology that have more of an impact on gender?  Research points more to nature BUT  Impossible to say for sure because as soon as a child is born the socialisation process begins so we just can’t separate the two.  **A\*-**A better explanation maybe the biosocial explanation. A female’s reproductive biology means she naturally has the role of caring for child and this then is reflected in how she is socialised to gender. So the fact that this is reflected across culture may not just mean it is nature but that her biology has led to her being socially prepared for that role. | **Reliability**  Pingree (1978), found that gender stereotyping was reduced when children were shown TV adverts featuring women in non-stereotypical roles, however, it was also found that pre-adolescent boys’ stereotypes became stronger following exposure to the non-traditional models. This ‘backlash’ calls into question, not only the usefulness of the research in terms of its application, but also the influence that media exposure has on children’s sex role behaviour. | |