Hypothetical Case Study

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**Introduction**

It is a natural fact that a human's life goes through a number of phases, throughout the lifetime. A person goes through many stages in their life, which impacts their mental well-being. These phases or stages of life leave a deep mark on the mental upbringing of a person and result in varied behaviours exhibited by that person in society. This behaviour may comprise of multiple aspects, like behaviour within the family, behaviour with parents, behaviour with siblings, behaviour with friends, behaviour with teachers and behaviour with other social relations (Morgan, 2014). This aspect of human life is popularly known as human growth and development in specialized subjects like psychology, human sciences, social development and human development.

Psychologists and social workers are currently very interested in the topic of human growth and development and various theories have been developed in this respect. These theories help experts in the field of psychology and social work interpret different sorts of human behaviour in various situations and with different people. These theories include life course development and transition theories. They are also used to explain the impact of different factors over the development cycle of a person. Some of the prominent names that have contributed a lot in this area are Bowlby, Erikson, and Bronfenbrenner.

In addition to this, another theory that is very popular and equally helpful in understanding the impacts of various facets of society on the life of an individual is Ecological Systems Theory. A number of research articles are being written and studies being complied on the topic of social dimensions and various relational aspects. The ecological theory is also very helpful in the avenues of social sciences, social work and psychology and acts as a guiding light to discover and interpret the complications of the behaviour of various individual in their environments.

The following piece of writing discusses the case of a troubled family, the Askin Family that is going through a tough time due to multiple issues in the family structure. The biggest problem for the family is the eldest child’s behaviour that is very much worrisome for the whole family. The upcoming details will discuss the behaviour of the oldest child of the family, Justin Askin, and the various aspects that are contributing to shaping that behaviour. Moreover, this paper will also discuss the possible factors that can contribute to the well-being and improvement of the child’s behaviour.

**Discussion**

There are multiple concepts, theories and laws in the field of psychology. Social sciences and social work define the attitude and behaviour of humans in different aspects. These theories help in the study of multiple human behavioural patterns under different influences and also help identify how these behaviours change in different circumstances. These theories also serve as a guiding light to define the development of various attitudes and behaviours over the course of time. Two of the most prominent theories that have been extensively used by researchers, social workers and psychologists in this respect are the Life Course Theory and Ecological Theory.

**Life Course Theory**

Life Course Theory is a concept developed specifically for studying the behaviour of individuals and analyzing their overall lives in the context of structure, society and culture. The theory considers various coordinates of the human life under the microscope of society, relationships, the structure of the family the individual is living in, the structure of the society the individual is living in and the cultural dimensions followed by the people of his/her geographical location (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). It was developed in the 1960s and was an extension of Znaniecki's and Thomas' work. The Life Course Theory is also more commonly known as the Life Course Perspective. It is also called the Life Course Approach.

**Ecological Systems Theory**

Ecological System Theory, in contrast to the Life Course Theory, attempts to examine the relationships of an individual on a wider context. It includes factors like an overall community or a larger determinant of society. In simple words, it determines the impact of an overall environment or ecological system on the lifespan of a person or an individual. It is a very useful and helpful theory that is mostly used by community psychologists, social workers and social scientists to check the aspects of the various factors of the environment over the life of a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The Ecological Systems Theory takes into account multiple layers of the environment in which an individual lives or grows up. There are five layers of any environment, according to this theory, and they have been titled as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem.

Since this area of science is making progress by leaps and bounds, the ecological systems theory now also takes technology into consideration while commenting over the relationship of an individual with its society and environment. The Ecological systems theory was developed by [Urie Bronfenbrenner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urie_Bronfenbrenner) and there are multiple other terms used for this theory like Human Ecology Theory, Development in Context or Ecological/Systems Framework.

**Introduction to the Family**

The subject under discussion for this case study belongs to a broken family. The family name is Askins and there were initially five members in it, namely Fred Askin, Gill Askin, Justin Askin, Hannah Askin and Phillip Askin. The Askins used to live a happy life until the head of the family, Mr. Fred Askin decided to leave the children’s' mother and move out of the house. Gill Askin was very shocked due to his behaviour but got over it and started to repair her life. She decided to stay by the children and focus on their development and growth.

Mrs. Gill Askin started living with her parents after the separation, however, she did not take any financial help from them. She decided to be self-sufficient and pursued her career in teaching once again, as she used to be before the birth of her children. Mr. Fred Askin, on the other hand, is an accountant and works in an accountancy firm.

**Introduction to the Subject**

Justin Askin, the eldest child of the Askin Family, was born in 2003 and is about to reach puberty. He is a school student and lives with his mother Gill Askin. The whole family is very much worried due to the stubborn and aggressive behaviour of the child. Although the mother of the children allows them to visit and spend time with their father every second week, Justin still craves the company of his father and likes to spend time with him. Justin gives the justification that he likes going to the "footy" with his father and doing things like watching movies and going to the games with him.

Justin, however, does not like his father's girlfriend, Susie, with whom his father has shifted after the separation. He explains that he hates Susie because she stops him from doing things and having fun. He also considers his own mother as a worried woman who is always in depression.

**History of the Subject’s Behavior**

Justin Askin’s aggressive behaviour has been a pain for all his family and other social relations from a long time. His behaviour has been getting worse over the course of time and he is having more anger issues. Individuals related to Justin expressed their opinions about him in the following ways.

**Mother**

Justin’s mother, Gill Askin, said that Justin has always been a tough child since his childhood and his behaviour is worsening with age.

**Father**

Contrary to his mother’s concerns, Fred Askin, Justin’s father, is pretty much relaxed about his son’s behavioural issues. According to him, Justin is just a child with a bad temper and he will learn how to control it with age.

**Siblings**

Justin has two younger siblings, Hannah and Phillip, who are tired of Justin's rude and aggressive behaviour. Sometimes he hits his siblings, which becomes an additional source of stress for his mother.

***Hannah.***

Hannah Askin is the middle child of the Askin family and is deeply affected by her elder brother’s behaviour. She is a brilliant student at school and the favourite child of her parents. She has learned to get away whenever her brother starts to get angry.

***Phillip.***

Philip Askin is the youngest child of the Askin family. He is too small to interpret things right now but he does not hold very pleasant views about his elder brother. Philip considers him a space monster who can reach anywhere and kill anyone.

**Factors That May Be Negatively Impacting Justin’s Well-Being**

Taking into consideration Justin’s case, there are many factors that may be impacting Justin’s behaviour in a negative way. The Ecological Systems Theory will come into the effect at this point as the relationships of the subject have a deep impact over the mental state of the subject (Hammond, 2010). He was significantly disturbed due to the conditions of his family, especially the relation between his mother and father.

He was raised up in childcare in his early childhood as his mother was working most of the time. Gill Askin remembers that she went to teach and now regrets putting her child in the hands of others for his upbringing. It was a major reason that Justin developed anger issues because he did not get that attention that is required in the early years of an individual's life. Moreover, as it can be seen that Justin was a “daddy’s boy” and he was close to his father, his moving out left a deep impact over his young mind and he developed a complicated thought structure.

**Strengths, Resources and Protective Factors of the Askin Family**

There are multiple aspects of the Askin family that prove that although being very shattered and broken, they are still very strong and have not given up in the face of these stressful circumstance. These aspects can be examined and analyzed in the light of the Life Course Theory as they are related to the structure of the family (Hepworth, et. al., 2016).

Firstly, the biggest strength of the Askin family is their self-sufficiency. It is also one of the biggest resources. Mrs. Gill Askin is an independent woman with an open mind. She did not give up when her husband decided to leave her and started her teaching career again. Her open-mindedness can be seen from the fact that she allows her children to see and meet their father every second weekend. Moreover one of the other major strengths or the resource of the family is their house. According to Gill Askin, Fred has still not filed any case for the settlement of assets, which is a positive point. Even If he files a suit for the settlement, she plans to keep the house to herself, as it is a big asset for her.

**Possible Approaches to Facilitating Greater Wellbeing and Person: Environment Fit for Justin.**

Many methods can be adopted in order to bring an improvement in the attitude and behaviour of the child under discussion. It is an established fact that the harshness in the behaviour of the boy, Justin Askin, is due to the sudden separation of his parents, but it cannot be reversed. It is an irreversible event but some measures can be taken to take care of the aggressiveness of the boy.

As it can be seen, Justin enjoys being with his dad because he indulges in constructive and adventurous activities with him. He takes him to “footy” and lets him play games and watch movies. This excites him and he likes to spend time with his father more as compared to spending time with his mother. The child’s mother, Gill Askin, can adopt the same measures to relax the young boy so that he can feel the same level of attachment with his mother.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it can be seen that the behaviour exhibited by the subject Justin Askin, is a result of multiple factors. All these factors lie within his closed society and relationships. One of the major reasons for his aggressive and stubborn behaviour is the separation of his parents. He was very close to his father and his drifting away and giving attention to someone else broke him. He tried to cover up this crack with angry and aggressive behaviour. Moreover, he is angry over the fact that his teachers, friends and peers do not take him seriously.

If observed under the lens of Ecological Systems Theory and Life Course Theory, there have been serious transitions in the life of Justin which have shaped him up into an aggressive and stubborn boy. The problem is going to worsen, as he is entering his teenage years, and if proper psychological treatment is not sought for the rectification of his behaviour.

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