



A Reflection of Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory in the Adolescent Character of Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*¹

**ภาพสะท้อนทฤษฎีพัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาของ ณอง เพียเจต์
ในตัวละครวัยรุ่น แคตตันิส เอฟเวอร์ดีน ในนวนิยายไตรภาคชุด
เดอะ হังเกอร์เกมส์**

ธิติสรร พึงกัน

Thitisan Phuengkan²

อุษา พัดเกตุ

Usa Padgate³

พรวีร์ ทันนิเทศ

Pornrawee Thunnithet⁴

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์พัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาและปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อพัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาของตัวละคร แคตตันิส เอฟเวอร์ดีน ซึ่งเป็นตัวละครหลักในนวนิยายไตรภาคชุด เดอะ হังเกอร์เกมส์ ของซูชาน คอดลินส์ โดยใช้ทฤษฎีพัฒนาการทางสติปัญญาของ ณอง เพียเจต์ ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่า แคตตันิส ถ่ายทอดพัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาตามกรอบทฤษฎีพัฒนาการทางสติปัญญาของเพียเจต์ได้ครบในทุกแง่มุม โดยผ่านกระบวนการต่างๆ อาทิ เช่น การตั้งสมมติฐาน การคิดถึงความน่าจะเป็น การทดลองเพื่อสังเกตผล เป็นต้น นอกจากนี้ พัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาของ แคตตันิส ที่ให้เห็นว่า สภาพแวดล้อมในล้านต่อสู้เป็นปัจจัยที่ส่งผลให้ แคตตันิสมีพัฒนาการทางด้านสติปัญญาเพื่อเอาตัวรอดจากภัยนตรายต่างๆ อย่างไรก็ตาม ตัวละคร แคตตันิส อาจจะ แสดงให้เห็นถึงพัฒนาการที่รวดเร็วและเด่นชัดเกินกว่าวัยรุ่นทั่วไปในโลกแห่งความจริง เนื่องจากว่า เหตุถูกสร้างให้ ใช้วิถีอยู่ในสภาพแวดล้อมที่ให้ดร้ายและแข็งแกร่งกับสถานการณ์ที่อันตรายมากกว่าที่วัยรุ่นโดยทั่วไปพบเจอในความเป็นจริง

คำสำคัญ: พัฒนาการของวัยรุ่น ตัวละครหลัก นวนิยายไตรภาคชุด เดอะ หังเกอร์เกมส์ ทฤษฎีพัฒนาการทางสติปัญญาของ ณอง เพียเจต์

¹ This research article is part of an M.A. thesis titled “A Reflection of Adolescent Development Theories in the Character of Katniss Everdeen in The Hunger Games Trilogy” Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University.

² M.A. student, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University.

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University.

⁴ Lecturer, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University.



Abstract

This study aims to analyze the cognitive development and the factors that influence the cognitive development of the character of Katniss Everdeen, the main character of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games Trilogy* through Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. The findings indicate that in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss develops her cognition in accordance with Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory in all the aspects such as hypothetical reasoning, thinking about possibility and probability, and propositional operation etc. In addition, the findings indicate that the arena environments contribute greatly to her cognitive development in her struggle to survive the killing games. However, Katniss's cognition seems to develop faster than that of an average real-life adolescent because she is portrayed to live in brutal surroundings and confront situations that are far more dangerous than those in the life of an average real-life adolescent.

Keywords: Adolescent Development, Main Character, *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Introduction

Rationale and Background of the Study

Adolescence is one of the important periods of the human life cycle. Adolescents will grow up into adults who take important roles and drive the community in the future. During adolescence, individuals will face many types of development and choose their own identity which may influence them in their path to maturity. Hence, the study of the adolescent development in a novel is an initial way that can help the readers to understand the nature of youth because the characterization of adolescent characters may reflect the developmental processes which are similar to the development of the adolescents in the real world.

Since literature helps reflect many components that involve humans in the real world, in order to gain in-depth understanding of adolescents, the study of the leading adolescent character in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games Trilogy* is a way to understand real-life adolescents. Therefore, this study is conducted to investigate and analyze the adolescent development of the main character of this trilogy, Katniss Everdeen, focusing on the aspect of her cognitive development through Jean Piaget's renowned Theory of Cognitive Development.

Research Objective

This study is conducted to investigate the adolescent development of the main character of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss Everdeen, through Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development focusing on the adolescent cognitive development.

Research Questions

1. How does the character of Katniss Everdeen reflect the adolescent development theories of Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development?



2. What are the factors influencing the cognitive development of Katniss Everdeen?

The Scope of the Study

This is a descriptive research focusing on the analysis of Katniss Everdeen, the main character of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development will be applied to analyze Katniss Everdeen's cognitive development. In this study, three books will be used as the primary sources for the analysis:

1. *The Hunger Games*, printed in 2008 by Scholastic Inc. (374 pages.)
2. *Catching Fire*, printed in 2009 by Scholastic Inc. (391 pages.)
3. *Mockingjay*, printed in 2010 by Scholastic Inc. (390 pages.)

Moreover, this study will focus only on the analysis of the main female character, Katniss Everdeen. Other parts and components in this series, such as other characters, settings, and themes will not be analyzed in this study.

Literature Review

The Hunger Games Trilogy

The Hunger Games Trilogy is written by Suzanne Collins. The series contains three novels: *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010). As of 2015, the series had been translated into 51 languages (Scholastic, 2015) and adapted into popular films. The story of the trilogy is portrayed from Katniss Everdeen's point of view. It relates to the adolescent life and reflects the development of adolescents in several important aspects.

The story of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* occurs in a futuristic nation called Panem, which consists of one wealthy Capitol that takes control of twelve districts. All of the twelve districts must send their human tributes to the Capitol in order to join the annual competition called the Hunger Games which is a reality show broadcast to all districts in Panem. Every year, two tributes, one male and one female, from each district join the Games. Each fights and tries to kill the others so that he/she becomes the last man standing and proclaimed victor by the Gamemakers. The Capitol holds this competition to show the people that although the victors of the Hunger Games are the strongest warriors, they are still inferior to the Capitol's power. The oppression of the Capitol makes many resentful, and they decide to fight against the Capitol.

Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

In this study, Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development is employed to investigate Katniss's cognitive development. This study will emphasize the fourth period of Piaget's theory (*formal operations*) because, in terms of age period, this stage is directly related to the adolescent cognitive development. Four aspects of this period will be applied in the investigation of Katniss's character: the *structures developed in formal operational stage*, *content of formal thought*, *affective development*, and *intellectual development*.



Research Methodology

Research Design

This study applied the qualitative research methods by means of a descriptive analysis to investigate the development of the main adolescent character of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss Everdeen, through Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development focusing on the part relating to adolescent development.

Research Framework

Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development consists of four aspects as follows:

1. Structures Developed in the Formal Operational Stage

In the *structures developed in the formal operational stage*, adolescents will face two important sides of cognitive developments which are *hypothetical-deductive reasoning* and *scientific-inductive reasoning*. According to Brainerd (1978, p.205), *hypothetical-deductive reasoning* is “the reasoning that involves deducing conclusions from premises which are hypotheses rather than from the facts that the subject has actually verified”. Adolescents in the formal operational period can think in terms of logical implication and possibility by creating a symbol in their mind and making an assumption of a logical conclusion. *Scientific-inductive reasoning* is a main reasoning process which uses specific facts to make conclusions about situations. Formal operational adolescents reason as scientists do when they are faced with problems (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958). One of the characteristics of scientific reasoning is combinatorial reasoning which is the ability to think about variations at any given time.

2. Content of Formal Thought

In the *content of formal thought*, the adolescents will face two developmental processes which Piaget indicates as *propositional operations* and *formal operational schemes*. *Propositional operation* is abstract, logical and systematic. In this process, adolescents move through many steps while hypothesizing, experimenting, observing the outcomes and making the conclusion from those steps. As for the *formal operational schemes*, according to Wadsworth (1996 p.121), they are “less abstract than propositional schemes and bear a closer likeness to scientific reasoning than propositional operations do”. Two examples of formal operational schemes are *probability* and *proportion*. Formal operational children response to a situation by relying on probability while most concrete operational children use a strategy, and most preoperational children often make predictions.

3. Affective Development

In the *affective development*, the *formation of personality* is key. According to Piaget, the formation of personality is developed during adolescence, when adolescents seek their places as contributing members of the society. Piaget views personality as a final aspect of social development which occurs automatically.



4. Intellectual Development

In the *intellectual development*, adolescents will face two important developmental processes which are *egocentrism* and *idealism*. According to Wadsworth (1996, p.130), *egocentrism* is “a constant companion of cognitive development”. Adolescents are encouraged by their ability to make logical thoughts and hypotheses which propel their egocentric belief to think that the world has to submit to logical schemes rather than to a real system. *Idealism* is the reasoning which is based on the egocentric thinking of formal thought. As Wadsworth (1996, p.132) states, “When a typical adolescent with formal operations makes judgments based on reasoning, his or her conclusions seem to be idealistic because they are logical”. Adolescent idealism, however, may lack some of the real facts of human behaviors and society.

Data Analysis

In this study, the main character's behaviors, thoughts and feelings were carefully investigated based on Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development in order to gain in-depth understanding of the development. The data analysis was conducted in the following steps:

First, the researcher reviewed the literature related to adolescent development and human development theories in different sources such as textbooks, journals, the Internet, research studies and previous graduate theses.

Second, the researcher read all the three books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* to explore all the situations and events portrayed in the story. The events involving the characterization of Katniss were noted and investigated based on the theory, including Katniss's dialogues, behavior and thought, the dialogues of other characters mentioning Katniss, and events related to Katniss.

Third, the researcher classified the characterization of Katniss into four main cognitive development categories which are: the *Structures Developed in the Formal Operational Stage*, *Content of Formal Thought*, *Affective Development* and *Intellectual Development* and supported the categorization with descriptive details from the story.

Finally, the researcher investigated the events and situations related to Katniss in all the four categories in order to examine the factors affecting her cognitive development. All factors influencing the cognitive development of Katniss were identified in order to describe important impulses encouraging her development.

Nevertheless, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development relating to adolescent development was not applied to investigate the character of Katniss in the epilogue of the last book, *Mockingjay*, because in that section, the character had become an adult which was not the focused period of this research.



Findings and Discussion

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss is a 16-year-old girl who lives in a small district in a dystopian country called Panem. After her father's death, Katniss takes over the role of the family's breadwinner and feeds her family by hunting illegally in the woods. Although she has great domestic responsibilities, hers are not very different from the responsibilities of some of the other adolescents in her district who also have to struggle against poverty. However, after she is sent to the fighting arena in the 74th Hunger Games, Katniss's cognition seems to develop faster than other adolescents. In order to survive in the arena, Katniss nurtures various kinds of cognitive development because her thinking faculties have become vital for her survival. Katniss is forced to estimate and anticipate all situations based on hypotheses or the combination of her thinking processes when she is fighting or avoiding other tributes. She also thinks of all possibilities when she confronts brutal situations. For this reason, Katniss's cognitive development is influenced by a major impulse to stay alive when she is forced to transform from a girl whose only preoccupation is to feed her family into a warrior who has to survive and hunt other humans in the arena. For this reason, Katniss's cognition is greatly developed throughout the first book because her life is changed from a relatively common life of an adolescent to a brutal life of a killer.

In *Catching Fire*, Katniss becomes 17 and is sent back into the fighting arena. Although she has experiences fighting and surviving in the arena, it is different this time because she has to fight with other past victors who are all adults. For this reason, her cognitive process becomes especially vital for her survival. It helps her estimate her enemies' plan and also make a plan to protect herself from all the dangers. Katniss develops her cognition through various types of developmental methods. While staying in the training center, she expresses a cognitive ability when she evaluates other tributes' skills in order to find her new allies. Moreover, while in the arena, she has to think about her enemies' plans and skills on top of the Gamemakers' plans drawing hypotheses of all the possibilities. These cases indicate that Katniss continuously develops her cognition throughout this book because her enemies are all skillful victors of the cruel games. She also develops her cognition to cope with the dangerous situations that the Gamemakers create to obstruct her games.

In *Mockingjay*, after Katniss is rescued from the arena by the revolutionists, she becomes the Mockingjay, a sign of revolution. Being a central figure of the revolution against the Capitol, Katniss continuously develops her cognitive abilities because she carries the burden requiring her to persuade other people to join the revolution and lead the people to fight against the Capitol army. Katniss employs various types of thinking processes to analyze the situations in the war. In addition, in the last part of this book, Katniss has to analyze the possibilities that will help end the war and the Games. Such evidence shows that Katniss exhibits cognitive development throughout the story in evaluating the situations and events of the war. She also makes experiments and hypotheses to deduce possible results before judging something.



For the research question one: *How does the character of Katniss Everdeen reflect the adolescent development theories of Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development?*, the findings reveal that Katniss reflects the adolescent cognitive development throughout the series, as evident in more than 100 incidents derived from different parts of the trilogy. In this paper, 15 situations were selected to show Katniss's cognitive development in each category of the framework as follows:

1. Structures Developed in the Formal Operational Stage

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss shows this category of cognitive development extensively by thinking through hypotheses and possibilities. After Katniss is rescued by Rue, another contestant in the Games, they decide to destroy the supplies of the Careers who temporarily team up to hunt the others. Katniss presents the cognitive development by inventing a plan to weaken the advantage of the enemies. As Piaget (cited in Wadsworth, 1996) suggests, adolescents can create a symbol in their mind and assume the logical conclusion. This scene indicates that Katniss creates a plan while thinking about various possibilities to destroy the Careers' supplies and estimating the best results. Finally, she decides to shoot a bag of apples to let the apples fall to the ground and trigger bombs planted around the pile of supplies by the Careers as protection from those outside the group:

I'm genuinely thinking of trying to re-create Foxface's trip up to the pyramid in hopes of finding a new means of destruction when my eyes light on the burlap bag of apples. I could sever the rope in one shot, didn't I do as much in the Training Center? It's a big bag, but it still might only be good for one explosion. If only I could free the apples themselves... (Collins, 2008, p.220)

Katniss's cognition continuously develops throughout the first book. One of the rules of the fighting arena in which the main plot of *The Hunger Games* takes place is that the competition must have only one victor. When there are only Peeta and Katniss left alive, Peeta asks Katniss to kill him, but Katniss will not do it. Instead, she devises a plan to make it seem as though she and Peeta are about to commit suicide. In such case, the Games would have no victor and the Gamemakers would be shamed by it. In order to save the day, the Gamemakers might choose to let both of them live by announcing that both are victors. According to Piaget, adolescence is the period in which humans develop the thinking process by using hypotheses. Adolescents make hypotheses to come up with possibilities for the things they doubt. In this scene, Katniss uses a hypothesis and thinks about the possibility of negotiating with the Gamemakers to make them announce that the contest has two victors: Katniss and Peeta:

We both know they have to have a victor. Yes, they have to have a victor. Without a victor, the whole thing would blow up in the Gamemakers' faces. They'd have failed the Capitol. Might possibly even be executed, slowly and painfully while the cameras broadcast it to every screen in the country. If Peeta and I were both to die, or they thought we were... (Collins, 2008, p.344)



In *Catching Fire*, Katniss finds a team in some of the victors, namely Peeta, Finnick, Mags, Johanna, Beetee and Wiress. On the beach, they talk about the dangerous events that they have confronted in the jungle. Wiress, who has been emotionally disturbed by the situations, keeps saying "Tick tock" to herself. Katniss then successfully analyzes that the format of the arena is a clock with the information derived from the other victors. According to Steinberg (1993), adolescents develop the ability to think in multidimensional terms. They can think in many aspects through complicated lenses, and they can explain various kinds of things they face. In this scene, Katniss employs the combinatorial reasoning to analyze the arena's format. She manages the sequences of the dangerous events into sections, and evaluates the time that each event occurs sequentially. In addition, she also thinks about variations by connecting her thoughts with Wiress's words, which helps her conclude that the format of the arena is a clock:

The lightning there. In the next pie wedge overcame the blood rain, where Johanna, Wiress, and Beetee were caught. We would have been in the third section, right next to that, when the fog appeared. And as soon as it was sucked away, the monkeys began to gather in the fourth. Tick, tock. My head snaps to the other side. A couple of hours ago, at around ten, that wave came out of the second section to the left of where the lightning strikes now. At noon. At midnight. At noon. "Tick, tock," Wiress says in her sleep. As the lightning ceases and the blood rain begins just to the right of it, her words suddenly make sense. "Oh," I say under my breath. "Tick, tock." My eyes sweep around the full circle of the arena and I know she's right. "Tick, tock. This is a clock." (Collins, 2009, p.325)

In *Mockingjay*, Katniss's cognitive development is evident when she reasons why the Capitol-owned hovercraft drops bombs on the Capitol citizens. According to the theories of human development, adolescents have developed their cognition to be more logical and use a hypothesis to analyze their thoughts. They can think systematically in terms of mental actions (Crain, 2005). This makes them look for the hypotheses and possibilities in the things they doubt, which is similar to the way Katniss acts when she questions why the Capitol's hovercraft kills its own citizens. She deduces two possibilities: that the Capitol may be using children as a human shield in their defense against the rebels, or that the rebels may have taken control of the Capitol's hovercraft and dropped the bombs to end the war:

There are two possibilities, although the details associated with them may vary. First, as I've believed, that the Capitol sent in that hovercraft, dropped the parachutes, and sacrificed its children's lives, knowing the recently arrived rebels would go to their aid. There's evidence to support this. The Capitol's seal on the hovercraft, the lack of any attempt to blow the enemy out of the sky, and their long history of using children as pawns in their battle against the districts. Then there's Snow's account. That a Capitol hovercraft manned by rebels bombed the children to bring a speedy end to the war. (Collins, 2010, pp.359-360)



2. Content of Formal Thought

In *The Hunger Games*, after Katniss is sent to the arena, she stays alone and keeps out of the way of everyone else for much of the time. From the point of view of the Gamemakers, her isolation makes the show boring. In order to manage the boredom of the audience, the Gamemakers induce fireballs to attack Katniss to drive her out of a refuge. After the assault of the Gamemakers' fireballs, Katniss thinks about reasons why she is attacked by fireballs and estimates the probable result of this assault. According to Steinberg (1993), adolescence is the period when humans develop the general thinking process into metacognition. They are in control of cognitive activities which help them to manage their cognitive process and control their thinking behavior. Moreover, adolescents can manage their introspection, self-consciousness and intellectualization. In this situation, Katniss thinks about the best probability to explain why the Gamemakers send the fireballs to drive her out of her hiding place. She concludes that the Gamemakers want her to be hunted by the Careers in order to attract the audiences' attention. Moreover, while escaping from the fireballs, she knows that the firewall must end somewhere. She also reasons that she will be safe from the Careers if she can get back behind the fire line:

Where are the Gamemakers driving me? Back to the lake? To a whole new terrain filled with new dangers? . . . The wall of fire must have an end and it won't burn indefinitely. Not because the Gamemakers couldn't keep it fueled but because, again, that would invite accusations of boredom from the audience. If I could get back behind the fire line, I could avoid meeting up with the Careers. (Collins, 2008, p.174)

In *Catching Fire*, during the time with her team in the arena, Katniss proves her cognitive development in terms of propositional operation in effectively dealing with as well as exploiting the force field. According to Piaget (cited in Wadsworth, 1996), adolescents develop their propositional operation by hypothesizing, experimenting and observing before drawing a conclusion. Katniss makes an experiment by tossing nuts to find the extent of the force field. Then, she observes the force field through a puff of smoke which occurs after the nuts hit the force field. This strategy helps Katniss locate the force field easily and also helps protect others in her team from being electrocuted by the force field:

I cut down a bunch of hard nuts that hang like grapes from a nearby tree and toss them ahead of me as I go. It's good I do, too, because I have a feeling I'm missing the patches that indicate the force field more often than I'm spotting them. Whenever a nut hits the force field, there's a puff of smoke before the nut lands, blackened and with a cracked shell, on the ground at my feet. (Collins, 2009, p.285)

In *Mockingjay*, playing with her sister's cat, Buttercup, Katniss's propositional operation brings about the realization that she is but a pawn in the President's cruel game. During an assault from the Capitol after Katniss has been rescued from the



fighting arena and Peeta has been abducted by the government, Katniss escapes to the bunker of District Thirteen. There, having nothing else to do, she plays with Buttercup by projecting a flashlight around it, and makes everyone laugh when Buttercup tries to catch the intangible light. Soon she realizes that she herself is in the same situation as Buttercup. As Piaget & Inhelder (1958) suggest, adolescents extend their thoughts from concrete to more abstract and higher-order operations. They make hypotheses and conduct experiments to observe the outcomes and effects and to conclude the results in systematic ways. In this particular scene, Katniss makes a hypothesis that her attempt and failure to protect Peeta can be compared to Buttercup following the light around in vain. Then, she experiments with the light on the wall and observes Buttercup's reaction. Finally, she discovers that Buttercup can never catch the spot of light on the wall and understands that she is used as a pawn in President Snow's game as Buttercup is in her game:

Crazy Cat becomes a metaphor for my situation. I am Buttercup. Peeta, the thing I want so badly to secure, is the light. As long as Buttercup feels he has the chance of catching the elusive light under his paws, he's bristling with aggression. (That's how I've been since I left the arena, with Peeta alive.) When the light goes out completely, Buttercup's temporarily distraught and confused, but he recovers and moves on to other things. (That's what would happen if Peeta died.) But the one thing that sends Buttercup into a tailspin is when I leave the light on but put it hopelessly out of his reach, high on the wall, beyond even his jumping skills. He paces below the wall, wails, and can't be comforted or distracted. He's useless until I shut the light off. (That's what Snow is trying to do to me now, only I don't know what form his game takes.) (Collins, 2010, pp.153-154)

3. Affective Development

In *Catching Fire*, several victors agree to help Katniss without letting her know of their plan. Johanna pretends to attack Katniss in order to cut out the tracker from Katniss's arm and leads other victors away from Katniss. However, Katniss thinks that Johanna tries to kill her and becomes confused. She then plans to kill everyone except Peeta. Nevertheless, Haymitch's warning eventually reminds her that her real enemy is President Snow, not the other victors. According to Piaget, personality in adolescence is the final aspect to be automatically developed. Adolescents' personality is directly related to their roles in the society. In this situation, Katniss realizes that her duty in the games is to terminate President Snow and what he stands for, not to fight against those in the same situation as herself:

"You just remember who the enemy is," Haymitch says. "That's all." Haymitch's last words of advice to me. Why would I need reminding? I have always known who the enemy is. Who starves and tortures and kills us in the arena. Who will soon kill everyone I love. (Collins, 2009, p.378)



Katniss's conscious explicit and eventual personality development is revealed in *Mockingjay*. During her visit to District Eight to meet people who support the revolution, the Capitol, aware of her presence there, sends hovercrafts to drop bombs on the hospital in the District. After the attack, Katniss is disturbed by the sight of the many casualties and decides to fight against the Capitol. This leads to her felling the truth about what the Capitol did to the people in District Eight by broadcasting the situations in the ruined town for all to see. She also persuades people to join the revolutionary army to fight against the Capitol. Finally, she understands that her role in the revolutionary army is to provoke the people to stand up to President Snow and fight against the Capitol:

Suddenly, there I am, replacing the mockingjay, standing before the real flames and smoke of District 8. "I want to tell the rebels that I am alive. That I'm right here in District Eight, where the Capitol has just bombed a hospital full of unarmed men, women, and children. There will be no survivors." my hands lifting up to indicate the outrage around me. "This is what they do! And we must fight back!"..... (Collins, 2010, pp.105-106)

Furthermore, Katniss's personality continuously develops. She thinks about her role in the society while trying to interpret what President Snow has said to her about the fragility of the Capitol. She finally comes to the conclusion that the Capitol will become powerless if the districts refuse to supply it with their products, and that her role is to encourage the districts to declare their independence to incur the desired collapse of the Capitol's dominance:

The Capitol's fragile because it depends on the districts for everything. Food, energy, even the Peacekeepers that police us. If we declare our freedom, the Capitol collapses. President Snow, thanks to you, I'm officially declaring mine today." (Collins, 2010, p.169)

4. Intellectual Development

In *The Hunger Games*, at the training center before being sent into the arena, Katniss reveals her idealistic development through her sense of betrayal after learning that Peeta has broken their pact by requesting to be trained separately. Without considering Peeta's circumstances, Katniss assumes that this act of Peeta is altogether unacceptable. Adolescents' idealism refers to the reasoning based on egocentric thoughts. Adolescents will doubt and argue about ideas and things that seem illogical to them, thus finding it hard to think kindly about views that are different from their own (Wadsworth, 1996). In this situation, Katniss does not understand why Peeta opts to train separately and feels betrayed by her only friend in the Capitol:

Haymitch shrugs. "Peeta has asked to be coached separately..... Betrayal. That's the first thing I feel, which is ludicrous. For there to be betrayal, there would have had to been trust first. (Collins, 2008, pp.113-114)



Moreover, Katniss exhibits an intellectual development in terms of egocentric thoughts when she thinks about the cruelty of the Hunger Games and decidedly plans her own childless future. She decides she will never get married because she fears that her children will also be sent to the arena. Egocentrism of adolescent is the cognitive process related to egocentric beliefs and logical schemes. According to Piaget (cited in Wadsworth, 1996), egocentrism is an important aspect of an adolescents' intellectual development. Adolescents are encouraged by their ability to make logical thoughts and hypotheses which propel their egocentric belief to think that the world has to submit to logical schemes rather than to a real system. In speculating that her children, a victor's children, would be more likely to be picked as tributes to heighten the Games' drama, Katniss expresses an egocentric view of life. She believes that she is, and will always be, the Capitol's marked man. At this point in the story, this belief is nothing but ungrounded:

I know I'll never marry, never risk bringing a child into the world. Because if there's one thing being a victor doesn't guarantee, it's your children's safety. My kids' names would go right into the reaping balls with everyone else's. And I swear I'll never let that happen. (Collins, 2008, p.311)

In *Catching Fire*, Katniss expresses egocentrism in many scenes. After she and Peeta are declared victors, they are required to tour all districts to give statements of the victors. However, President Snow threatens that he will kill everyone she cares about if she says anything about the uprisings that are taking place in various locations. Katniss, then, keeps silent about the news of the uprising to protect those she loves even though spreading the news might be more beneficial to the population as a whole. According to Elkind (1967), adolescent's egocentrism leads to an inability to distinguish things. They are often so occupied by their power of logical thoughts that they will use their own criteria to judge whether something is logical or not. Katniss decides to protect the people she loves by becoming part of the love act incited by the Capitol to divert the nation from the uprisings to the pairing of Katniss and Peeta as well as to play down her perceived role as a symbol of a revolution:

"Only you'll have to do even better if the uprisings are to be averted," he says. "This tour will be your only chance to turn things around." "I know. I will. I'll convince everyone in the districts that I wasn't defying the Capitol, that I was crazy with love," I say. (Collins, 2009, p.29)

In *Mockingjay*, Katniss is rescued from the arena by the revolutionists and provided accommodation in District Thirteen. Initially, everyone else keeps the fact that Peeta has been arrested by the Capitol from her. When she finds out about this, she is outraged despite the fact that people around her have kept it a secret for her best interest. Adolescents may think that the real system is inferior to their logical mind. They may be unable to distinguish between their perceived logical world and



the real world (Wadsworth, 1996). An ideal world, in their mind, is logical. When the logic is disturbed, so is the idealism. She feels that withholding her rights to know about Peeta's situations and whereabouts is illogical and self-serving, that their act serves the benefits of the revolution better than her own:

That I don't believe for a second that he didn't see Peeta's propo. That I feel completely betrayed that he didn't tell me about it. . . . "Why didn't you, Gale? And I did, by the way, when I asked you last night about what had been going on!" . . . I wanted to tell you, but everyone was afraid that seeing Peeta's propo would make you sick," he says. "They were right. It did. But not quite as sick as you lying to me for Coin." (Collins, 2010, pp.117-118)

For the research question two: *What are the factors influencing the cognitive development of Katniss Everdeen?*, the findings revealed that Katniss's cognitive development is most strongly influenced by the arena environments, especially in the first and second books.

Examples showing Katniss's cognitive development influenced by the arena environments in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* were analyzed and presented as follows:

Arena Environments

In both *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*, Katniss is sent into the fighting arena especially designed to inflict inconvenience, pain and death. To survive, she needs to enhance her cognitive skills to cope with both the obstacles sent by the Gamemakers and the other human tributes whose survival threatens her own. Katniss's cognitive development is exhibited numerous times in the desperate environments of the arena. Some of these will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

One of the attacks inflicted by the Gamemakers is the shooting of fireballs to force Katniss out of her shelter and simultaneously to engage the attention of the easily bored audiences. Dodging the fireballs, Katniss manages to make multiple plans while trying her best to be instinctive and stay alive. The incident clearly shows Katniss's enhanced cognitive abilities. A less challenging circumstance would almost certainly result in an exhibition of a lesser level of cognitive enhancement:

Whatever vague plan I had conceived regarding returning to my pond is wiped from my mind as I zigzag and dive and leap to avoid the fireballs... There's no time to judge if a move is the correct one. When there's a hiss, I act or die. (Collins, 2008, p.175)

Furthermore, when Katniss is hunted by the Careers, she climbs onto a tree to flee from them. The Careers, then, regroup on the ground waiting to kill her when she comes down in the morning. On the tree, Katniss notices a nest of mutation wasps, called tracker jackers, and constructs a plan to drive the Careers out of the area by cutting down the tracker jackers' nest and letting it fall on the Careers: *Better, I think, to sneak up here at dawn and send the nest into my enemies. (Collins, 2008, p.187)* The controlled environments of the arena force Katniss to think logically and creatively. She makes an efficient plan and makes use of the materials at hands effectively.



In *Catching Fire*, Katniss is the first one in her team to find out that water can relieve the pain as well as the injury caused by the poisonous fog. Running away from the fog, she arrives at a pond. She experiments with the water and observes that although water can cause more pain when it first touches the wounded skin, it helps wash out the poison in the end. This situation confirms that the environments of the arena help Katniss realize her ability for the propositional operation by hypothesizing, experimenting and observing before drawing an accurate conclusion:

I experiment by gingerly placing only my hand in the water. Torturous, yes, but then less so. And through the blue layer of water, I see a milky substance leaching out of the wounds on my skin. (Collins, 2009, p.304)

In conclusion, the arena environments act as important factors affecting Katniss's cognitive development. Katniss shows her cognitive abilities whenever she encounters problems in the arena. She also makes the best out of the limited resources she gets her hands on. The uncommon environments of the arena intensify Katniss's cognition and play a great role in her cognitive development.

Conclusion

Throughout the novel series of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss shows various types of cognitive development as introduced by Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. In all the three books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss reflects the *structures developed in the formal operational stage* when she thinks about different possibilities of the situations she is confronting. She also creates hypotheses to support her thoughts and thinks about possible variations before deducing the results. In addition, Katniss reflects the *content of formal thought* and the *intellectual development* in many situations. She experiments, observes the results and looks for the probabilities of those results. She also reflects egocentrism and idealism, which are typical characteristics of youth, throughout the series. However, in the first book, *The Hunger Games*, Katniss reflects the *affective development* at a lower level than the other types of cognitive development. Her personality first becomes distinctive in the second book, *Catching Fire*. This conforms to Piaget's belief that personality is the final aspect that will automatically occur in adolescents' life. Furthermore, the arena environments greatly influence Katniss's cognitive development. She needs to increase the ability of her thinking faculties in order to stay alive in the inhuman environments of the arena.

Consequently, the character of Katniss Everdeen reflects the adolescent cognitive development according to Piaget's famed theory. Her character is realistically developed in ways that an actual adolescent's is. In some situations, nevertheless, her development seems to progress faster than that of an actual adolescent. This is probably because her character is portrayed as adolescent who lives in much more brutal surroundings than those in which average adolescents live.



References

Brainerd, C. (1978). *Piaget's Theory of Intelligence*. Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Collins, S. (2008). *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press.

Collins, S. (2009). *Catching Fire*. New York: Scholastic Press.

Collins, S. (2010). *Mockingjay*. New York: Scholastic Press.

Crain, W. (2005). *Theories of Human Development: Concepts and Applications, Fifth Editions*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Elkind, D. (1967). Egocentrism in Adolescence. *Child Development*, 38, 1025-1034.

Hake, R. S. (2001). *Why Study Literature?* Patrick Henry College: Pro Christo et Libertate.

Kumar, S. (2011). *Transforming Realities vis-à-vis Postmodern Indian English Fiction*. IRWLE, VOL. 7, No. 2, July 2011, 1-9. Retrieved on November 8, 2015, from <http://worldlitonline.net/transforming-realities-vis-a.pdf>

Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1958). *The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence*. New York: Basic Books.

Rybakova, K., Piotrowski, A., & Harper, E. (2013). *Teaching Controversial Young Adult Literature with the Common Core*. Wisconsin English Journal, 55(1), 37-45. Retrieved on December 16, 2015, from <http://journals.library.wisc.edu/index.php/wej/article/viewFile/570/612>.

Scholastic. (2015). *The Hunger Games*. New Room. Retrieved on December 18, 2015, from <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/hungergames>.

Steinberg, L. (1993). *Adolescence (3rd ed.)*. New York, McGraw-Hill.

Wadsworth, B. J. (1996). *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive and Affective Development*. New York: Longman Publishers.

