In general Piaget’s ideas are supported but social and environment context are ignored. He failed to consider the effect that the social setting and culture may have on cognitive development. The development depends greatly on exposure of the individual and the education provided. Price-Williams et al looked at Mexican children raised in Pottery-making families and found that they could conserve quantity at the age of 6. This study shows that development can be shaped by the environment and contributes to Piaget’s theory stating that the stages must occur in order however the speed of the order depends on one’s environment and availability of information.

The final stage is the Formal operational stage and occurs at ages 11+. In this stage children are able to manipulate ideas in a hypothetical situation and can also manipulate abstract situations. Many times they reform to a systematic approach to thinking when provided with a hypothetical situation. The beaker problem showed that young children would randomly add combinations to the beaker until reaching their desired result whereas children aged 11+ would turn to a systematic approach.

The influence of Piaget’s ideas in developmental psychology has been enormous. He changed how people viewed the child’s world and their methods of studying children. He was an inspiration to many who came after and took up his ideas. Piaget’s ideas have generated a huge amount of research which has increased our understanding of cognitive development. His ideas have been of practical use in understanding and communicating with children, particularly in the field of education.

Piaget’s methods (observation and clinical interviews) are more open to biased interpretation than other methods. Because Piaget conducted the observations alone data collected are based on his own subjective interpretation of events. It would have been more reliable if Piaget conducted the observations with another researcher can compare results afterwards to check if they are similar.

One problem with Piaget’s theory is that all research has been conducted on few participants with the majority of the participating children in western culture. There may be a very different pattern of cognitive development in non-western countries. The result is that it would be inappropriate to apply Piaget’s theory on other cultures. In such situations there could be entirely different factors at work. Moreover due to the participants being mainly his own children the sample is biased, and accordingly the results of these studies cannot be generalized to children from different cultures. It is seen that only 30% of British adults reach early formal operations.