

# Key concepts in the psychoanalytic theory psychology essay



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There are several key concepts in the psychoanalytic theory; Freud's view of human nature being deterministic is one of them. The term deterministic or determinism in short means to be born with it, Corey (2009) stated that "according to Freud, our behavior is determined by irrational forces, unconscious motivations, and biological and instinctual drives" (p. 58). So Sigmund Freud's notion that there is no such thing as human accident and that future events are a result of previous actions. These actions are a result of our exposure to our environment, such as parents, friends, society, etc.

Another key concept of psychoanalytic is the unconscious mind in which the unconscious is said to be a state of mind that we are unaware of. The unconscious mind is said to be the storage space for our feelings, thoughts, urges and memories which are outside of our conscious awareness. The contents of the unconscious are mostly made up of the unacceptable and unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety or conflict (Kottakkal, 2008). Raymond & Danny mentioned that although the concept of the unconscious mind predates psychoanalysis, Freud's unique contribution was to discover how the concept could be used to understand and inform the treatment of psychological problems (2008).

Instincts are another key concept of the psychoanalytic approach in which, according to Richard & Burl (2002, as cited in Wolman, p. 39-40) are organic motivational forces, or drives. Instincts are categorized into two different classes, one being the life instincts, in which Freud had labeled Libido and the other is death instincts, Thanatos. Instincts according to Richard & Burl (2002, as cited by Hall, 1954) "direct psychological processes and function as the motivational forces in people. Each instinct has a source (energy), an

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aim (removal of a need), an object (such as food), and an impetus (strength)".

Theory of personality according to Richard & Burl (2002, as cited by Arlow, 1995) personality " evolves out of the interaction between inherent biological factors and the vicissitudes of experience." Psychoanalytic personality theory is based on several fundamental principles (p. 23-24). " Freud believed that the human mind was composed of three elements: the id, the ego, and the superego. The ego is the largely unconscious part of personality that mediates the demands of the id, the superego, and reality. Id is the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy basic urges, needs, and desires. The ego prevents us from acting on our basic urges (created by the id), but also works to achieve a balance with our moral and idealistic standards (created by the superego). The superego works to suppress the urges of the id and tries to make the ego behave morally, rather than realistically" (Kottakkal, 2008).

Freud's psychosexual theory of personality development consists of five different age stages. Starting with the earliest which is oral stage which occurs from birth- 18months, follow by the anal stage from 18 months- 3 to 4 years, the phallic stage at age 3-4 years – 5-7 years, the latent stage from 5- 7 to puberty and lastly the genital stage which occurs from puberty onwards. " The oral stage, new born babies are initially limited to sucking and drinking. Their sexual instinctual drive is therefore focused around the mouth, initially in passive sucking and chewing. Later, pleasure is derived from more aggressive biting and chewing. The anal stage, which occurs in toddlers, is subdivided into two phases – the expressive period, in which the <https://assignbuster.com/key-concepts-in-the-psychoanalytic-theory-psychology-essay/>

child derives pleasure in expelling faeces, and the retentive period, in which they derive pleasure from storing it. The anal stage coincides with toilet training in the child" (Priestley, 2001). " Third is the phallic stage, which deals with the inability to fully accept one's sexuality and sexual feelings, and also difficulty in accepting oneself as a man or woman" (Corey, 2009). The latency stage is considered to be the resting period or a period of tranquillity, " as latency stage occurs before the onset of puberty and is marked by the dormancy of the libido. Sexual and aggressive drives are channelled into more socially acceptable substitutes. Finally, the genital stage, coinciding with puberty, marks the return of conscious sexuality and finds its cathexis in the genitals. Emotional maturity is ultimately attained in this stage, although elements, in the form of fixations, from the earlier stages often remain" (Kottakkal, 2008).

Explain the strengths and weakness of this therapy. (15%)

Some people criticize that there are a number of practical limitations of psychoanalytic therapy. The lengthy duration of the whole treatment being one of it and according to Luborsky, O'Reilly-Landry & Arlow (2011) stated that " the emergence of brief, time-limited psychodynamic therapy is a partial response to the criticism of lengthy therapy. According to Strupp (1992) " he assumes that psychoanalytic therapy will remain a luxury for most people in our society. Strupp notes a decline in practices based on the classical analytic model due to reasons such as time commitment, expense, limited applications to diverse client populations, and questionable benefits. He believes there will be an increasing emphasis on short-term treatments for specific disorders, limited goals, and containment of costs (Corey, 2009). <https://assignbuster.com/key-concepts-in-the-psychoanalytic-theory-psychology-essay/>

The emphasis of focusing too much on the on a client's past, also became a contributing factor to the weakness of the psychoanalytic therapy. Too much time and effort is taken by the therapist to probe deeper into a client's mind to have a clear picture of the client's childhood and thus this therapy emphasis on knowing the client's past to determine the root or cause for the client's current situation. " A factor limiting the practical application of classical psychoanalysis is that many severely disturbed clients lack the level of ego strength needed for this treatment" (Corey, 2009).

Psychoanalytic therapy however has several good points such as it enable therapist a clear insight to a client's past childhood development and thus gives the therapist an understanding to why the client is reacting or behaving in this manner. It then allows the psychoanalytic therapist to use a treatment that is best suited to counter or solve the client's problem.

Psychoanalysis also enables the client to recognize their unconscious side, and also how unconscious affects their daily lives. Psychoanalysis is said to have a cathartic effect on its clients. As psychoanalysis probe in the client's mind, it allows the client to have an insight view of their unconscious mind. After which it leaves the client feeling relieve after having find out more about their self, as psychoanalysis helps the client to explain why their react and behave in such a manner or why they are facing their current predicament.

How do you feel the about the approach of this therapy? (15%)

The author personally agrees that the approach of psychoanalysis therapy does bring beneficial results to the clients however some of the methods

being used in this approach are not suited for it. Firstly, psychoanalysis therapy features mostly include free association and dream analysis. The author feels that both methods are able to produce substantial positive results to the clients however the process of it might prove to be any uphill task for the clients, as this therapy requires a certain degree of maturity and ego from their clients in order for them to obtain a positive result.

The process of this might prove to be quite intimidating for some clients as the therapist might be required push their clients to their emotional and mental limits. And thus some clients might not favor such a process being dealt on them as several reasons why, such as, fear of knowing what they might discover about themselves might be something hard for them to take in and fear of being push to their breaking points. Psychoanalysis therapy might also prove to be a bit unpopular among some therapist as comparing it to Carl Roger's person centered therapy; psychoanalysis therapy lacks the empathy that is shown towards their clients. Empathy is essential in any therapy as with it, the therapist shown a certain degree of understanding towards the client's current predicament and thus also show a sense of caring and passion in helping their clients to solve their problem and achieve a good positive result so as to enable their clients to continue living on with their life without having to fear of their problems being a hindrance their lives.

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