

Sigmund freuds structural theory research paper examples

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Sigmund Freud's theories have had several controversies in the past but they are very useful in different fields of study such as psychology. Among the many theories founded by Sigmund Freud is the psychoanalytic approach, which focuses on the conscious and the unconscious mind (Heffner 45). The structural model is one of the many personality models described by Sigmund Freud in his psychoanalytic approach. Under the structural model, Sigmund Freud divided the mind into three components of personality that work collaboratively to develop complex human behaviors. These elements are the id, the ego and the superego.

The id is the only personality element that is present from when a child is born. This feature of personality is completely unconscious and it involves aspects of instinctive and underdeveloped behaviors. Sigmund Freud asserts that the id is the foundation of all psychic energy in a person and thus it is the prime element of personality. The pleasure principle is the major driver of the id. This principle often strives for quick gratification of all needs, desires and wants. Therefore, if these needs needed by a person are not gratified immediately, the outcome is a state of anxiety and/or tension. This aspect of personality is very crucial at the early stages of a child's development because it ensures that a child does not lack any of its basic needs (Ryckman 99). If the baby is hungry or unwell, he or she cries until the parent meets the needs of the id. However, it is not possible for these needs to be met immediately as a person may desire. Going by the pleasure principle, the world would be ineffective because people would be grabbing other people's items to satisfy their needs. This kind of behavior would be unacceptable and disruptive in the society. Thus, the work of the id is to

resolve the anxiety that the pleasure principle creates through helping a person form a mental image of how to satisfy the need.

The ego is the personality element responsible for dealing with the realities of life. This ego emanates from the id and it ensures that the sudden urges of the id can be presented in a way acceptable to the reality. While the id functions only in the unconscious mind, the ego on the other hand operates in the preconscious, conscious and unconscious mind of a human being (Ryckman 77). This aspect of personality, the ego, functions based on the reality principle. The reality principle strives to meet the desires of the id in ways that are socially acceptable and realistic. Before making a decision on whether to abandon or act upon impulses, the reality principle determines the benefits and costs of the given actions. In several cases, the impulses of the id can be gratified through delayed satisfaction. However, the ego will with time permit behavior but only at suitable times and places. In addition, the ego relieves tension formed by unsatisfied impulses using the secondary process.

The superego is the final element of personality to develop according to Freud. This personality component holds all the internalized moral standards of a human being and other ideals that children acquire from their parents and from the society. It enables one to differentiate between right and wrong and make sound judgments. This aspect of personality is evident from the age of five. Two components make up the superego i. e. the ego ideal and the conscience. The ego ideal comprises of rules and standards that are of good behavior while the conscience involve those things that parents and society view as bad behavior. The superego operates in an effort to refine

and perfect behavior by suppressing all the unacceptable impulses of the id and striving to make the ego work under idealistic standards. Therefore, in order to develop a healthy personality, it is important to strike a balance among the id, the ego and the superego.

Application of the theory

Freud's structural theory has helped shape personalities, experiences and situations of people's childhood to adulthood. My friend is 24 years old and this theory is applicable to the stages she has undergone since her childhood stages to the level she is now. As a child, my friend would not determine between right and wrong because she relied on the unconscious mind for her operations. She would cry most of the time because it was difficult to express herself in any other way. As an infant, whenever my friend was uncomfortable because of too much heat or cold, she would use the id unconsciously to ensure that her needs were met. Any attention needed would be determined using the id to express the need (Heffner 87). At that point in time, my friend did not care whether it was possible to acquire a solution for the needs demanded because the desires were based on the pleasure principle. This stage occurred between birth and three years and my friend did not care about the needs of others including those of her parents. When the id demanded for something, nothing else was important. My friend began to develop with time after three years and began interacting more with the world and its people. It was at this point that my friend began to understand that other people have needs and desires that should be respected. This stage enabled my friend to realize that being selfish and impulsive would in the long-term hurt her and hence the need to consider

the reality of a situation. My friend began to act reasonably on reaching the ego personality stage because it was a stage of balancing reality and pleasure. It was at the ego stage that my friend began to handle conflicts and tests reasonably as a mature adult and enabled my friend to cope with arising problems that she faced on her journey to adulthood (Ryckman 55). During this stage, my friend was able to make sound plans and decisions regarding her life. My friend was able to develop good ego strength that would assist her in managing life pressures effectively.

Comparing my friend's behavior then and now, it is clear that she acts based on idealistic standards because of the work of the superego. The superego has helped in civilizing and perfecting my friend's behavior and currently she has managed to suppress all the unacceptable impulses of the id and acts based on ideals as opposed to reality. My friend's moral personality is strong because she has developed an ego ideal, which enables her to have good behavior approved by parents and society. She has learnt that the good behavior brings a feeling of pride, accomplishment and value (Heffner 54). On the other hand, my friend knows that the consequences of bad behavior, which springs from the conscience, are feelings of guilt and regret in a person.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would summarize the structural theory by Sigmund Freud to say that it requires a balance between the three personality elements in order to develop a healthy personality. The ego should be the middle ground that helps in bringing balance between the extreme ends of the id and the

superego. The ego is mostly conscious and it enables an individual to make sound judgments that affect the daily activities. It is the work of the ego to intervene between the irresistible urges of the id for immediate satisfaction and the dominance of the superego with standards, morality and discipline (Heffner 73). A person with a weak ego can be compared to a leader of a country who cannot be able to unite the extreme forces of left and right. In as much as the ego is important, it would not exist had the id personality element not preceded it. Every human being will often pass through the id stage at his or her infancy. The id stage is unconscious and based on the pleasure principle where the infant does not care about the needs of others but those of its own, which have to be met. It involves the most primitive and immature behaviors that infants exhibit. The id stage is the complete opposite of the superego stage, which is the final element of personality according to Freud. At the superego stage, human beings are rational and they act based on ideals. It is possible to differentiate good and bad behavior because of consequences that follow. Freud's structural theory is applicable to everyone in the society as human beings develop from childhood to adulthood.

Works Cited

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