

Introduction  
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define; it is



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## **Introduction**

Personality is hard to define; it is an attempt by man to summarize an individual.

It means describing and understanding other people. More than five different perspectives are employed in the study of personality and include the trait, learning, psychoanalytic and biological perspectives (Carver & Scheier, 2000). This paper aims at highlighting the major characteristics, similarities and differences between the psychoanalysis theories of Freud, Jung and Adler.

It will lay a particular emphasis on the stages of Sigmund Freud's theory, major Freudian defense mechanisms and their application to real life scenarios.

## **The Psychoanalytic Approach**

This was an approach to the study of personality developed by Sigmund Freud in late 19th century proposing that the human mental activities depended on his unconscious mind. Freud was a neurologist at a hospital in Italy where he dealt with psychiatric patients. Over the course of his career, Freud was faced with a major challenge, he realized that most of his patient's nervous symptoms lacked a physiological explanation and that neither science nor rational laws could explain phobias and other physical complains. Faced with these problems, Freud developed his now famous theory on personality and child development that helped him in solving neurotic disorders. Major aspects of the Freud's theory are: 1) the unconscious mind contains hidden memories and is in most of the times

responsible for our actions and manners, 2) That we are born with certain instincts that govern our behavior, 3) what we experience at childhood influences our development of emotions and personality, and 4) Id, ego and superego are three vital biological elements that represent our inherited instinctual drives. Jungian theory (Jung's analytic psychology) divides the human mind into three:- - The ego (conscious mind) - Personal (unconscious) ego- things forgotten but can be remembered, - Collective unconscious (e. g. immediate love). This is the part of the mind that differentiates his theory of analytic psychology from Freud's psychoanalytic approach. This part of the mind according to Carl Jung's theory is the inherited psyche (Boeree 2006). It keeps an individual's experiences but he/she is not aware, it influences one's emotions. His collective unconscious mind is believed to be deeper and made of emotional symbols he called archetypes.

Jung postulated that these symbols are universal and are found in all of us. They are passed down generations through repeating events. These archetypes make individuals respond similarly to common stimuli (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). Unlike Freud's theory, Jung's theory was not focused on sex, was more on history and leaned on spiritual. Alfred Adler experimented with the inferiority complex and the importance of the society. Adler's Individual psychology laid much importance on the uniqueness of individual's motivation and the importance of each individual's place in the society.

His emphasis was on the goal directedness of every individual nature and its influence on one's personality. Adler's theory differed with the Freudian theory in that when Freud stressed on pleasure and sexuality, Adler

emphasized the complexity of individual motivation. He (Adler) also laid much emphasis on social conditions which Freud tended to ignore. The theories of Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler all touch on the ego or 'I'. The ingenuity with which these three great psychologists handle this item of the human mind is an enough convincement to me. I in particular buy the whole of Freud's definition of this term.

I also agree with their conclusion that the unconscious mind generally influences our behavior and emotions. Their (especially Freud) division of the human mind into three different structures is inconclusive as we know it today. Their postulates were based on poor understanding of the human mind. All these theories were developed on medical ground and therefore largely pessimistic towards human personality. They are also pathological in outlook.

### **The Stages of Freud's theory**

Freud's psychological world involved a series of differing tensions like that between selfishness and the society. According to him, sexual energy was the underlying drive/motivation.

His theory of psychoanalytic approach was an endeavor to unearth the reason libido was the motivation for so many actions (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). Oral stage - The urge by infants to fulfill their hunger and thirst drives, security and pleasure make them suckle. When weaned at age one, a crisis arises between remaining dependent and growing up. Those infants fixated at this stage may forever seek satisfaction as adults from biting, chewing or even smoking.

Anal stage - Occurs between ages two and three as children are taught to use toilet. Some learn rather fast while others remain stagnant at this stage where they seek to maintain control over when and where they relieve themselves. At adult life, Freud says that these anal character types develop a certain personality like bathroom humor, orderliness, and organization.

Phallic stage - Phallic phase occur at age four where they direct their libido at their genitals and tend to discover their gender by age six. The Oedipus complex may develop at this stage. This is a great unconscious fear termed castration anxiety that a small five year boy developed from horses that he unconsciously likened to his father. Penis envy - These stage develop in some little girls who when they realize they don't have a penis associate with their father to have one and want to have a baby at adult life. At adult, they develop a weird personality that revolves around her genital identity. They tend to look for husbands who resemble their father to have a baby while men marry ladies who either look like their mother or are the opposite of their mothers. Latency stage - This is the stage between the Oedipus complex and puberty (11 years).

This phase is marked by little sexual expression and instead their libido is channeled towards going to school, making new friends, and generally socializing. Genital stage - Occur in those children that never got trapped in any childhood stages. These children lead a normal life as adults.

## **Freudian Defense Mechanisms**

These are the processes one's ego uses to protect itself from the reality. a)

Repression - helps an individual's ego push threatening thoughts into the

unconscious mind e. g. post traumatic stress b) Reaction formation – an ego defense strategy that tend to hide threatening impulses from one’s memory and instead put stress on the opposing thoughts. c) Projection – this defense strategy places on others the anxiety arousing impulses.

## **Summary**

Personality can simply be termed as meaning ‘ I’. Sigmund Freud has been considered the greatest psychologist of all times. Freud, Jung and Adler differed in most of their approaches toward the study of identity but while Jung and Freud divided the mind into three structures, Adler’s approach was different.

Freud’s theory on psychosexual analysis has been shown to be in stages advancing from infancy to adulthood. Freud also showed that the ego employs different defense mechanisms to deal with reality.

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