PYSC 333: Psychology of Personality

Session 2 – Freud’s Psychoanalytic Theory Part 2

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In an attempt to protect the ego and relieve the anxiety experienced, individuals use defense mechanisms. Freud proposes a number of defense mechanisms that individuals use to reduce anxiety. Freud also proposes five (5) stages of psychosexual development. According to Freud, these stages of psychosexual development contribute to the formation of a person’s personality. Some of Freud’s followers and other psychologists disagreed with him about some of his concepts. As a result, Freud dismissed them. They became known as Neo-Freudian.
At the end of this session, you should be able to

• List and explain the defence mechanisms used to protect the ego from anxiety

• Outline the five psychosexual stages of personality development

• Explain fixation and the consequences of unresolved conflicts at each stage of development—personality formation

• Briefly discuss 3 of the Neo-Freudians
The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

• Defense mechanisms
• Psychosexual stages of development
• Neo-Freudians
Reading List

• Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd (Ch. 4 &5)


• Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2005). *Theories of personality*. Belmont: Wadsworth. (Ch. 2 & 3)
Topic One

DEFENSE MECHANISMS
Defence Mechanisms

- Unconscious actions that the ego takes as a form of ‘self defence’ to immediately reduce the anxiety experienced and maintain psychic balance (Freud 1926/1959)

- Protect the ego and minimize anxiety and distress but the individual lives and operates within a distorted reality (Carducci, 2009)
• Types of defence mechanisms
1. Repression

- The ego unconsciously removes unacceptable id impulses or threatening impulses from the conscious mind into the unconscious mind.
- Thus, a person may experience loss of memory for unpleasant events.
- These memories remain within the unconscious in order not to provoke anxiety.
2. Denial

- An individual refuses to accept or acknowledge anxiety provoking information
- The ego distorts reality so that dealing with threatening impulses and information become easier (Carducci, 2009)
- Example- death is inevitable and unpredictable but most people will deny that they can die at any time
3. Rationalization

• An individual tries to justify his/her unacceptable behaviour by giving logical explanations

• One develops explanations to protect one’s self-esteem (Feldman, 1999)

• Example- when a man is stood up by his date
4. Displacement

- The ego redirects the expression of impulses or unwanted feeling/thought from
  - a) its original target (which is more threatening/unacceptable/stronger target) to
  - b) a less threatening/safer/weaker target (Carducci, 2009)
5. Projection

- Projecting oneself by unconsciously attributing one’s own unacceptable impulses, thoughts and feelings to other people

- Example- a man who wants to have an affair will accuse his wife of having an affair
6. Reaction Formation

- Expressing feelings or impulses that are opposite the unacceptable impulses
- The individual defends unacceptable impulses by acting opposite them
- Example- a person with homosexual tendencies may become a strong anti-homosexual activist
Dealing with a threatening situation by retreating to earlier, less mature behaviours/actions or an earlier stage of development

Example - Anxiety of first days at school - a child may regress to the oral comfort of sucking her thumb or biting her nails

Or an adult who cries whenever he/she has a problem
8. Undoing

• Engaging in a behaviour to make up for unacceptable feelings and actions

• Example- saying sorry for wronging a friend or

• A man who thinks of having an affair with his secretary goes home with flowers for his wife to undo/atone for these thoughts and feelings
9. Sublimation

- Converting unacceptable impulses into more socially acceptable actions
- E.g.- aggressive behaviour is substituted for a socially acceptable goal such as engaging in competitive sports
10. Compensation

- A person strives to make up for unconscious impulses or fears
- A business executive who unconsciously feel (feels) inferior or incompetent may become extremely competitive
11. Identification

- Incorporating a successful person’s goals, actions and values in one’s personality
- Individuals fully incorporate the morals and goals of society when they identify with their parent(s) and internalize their values and ideals (Lahey, 2001)
Conclusion

- Defence mechanism can provide immediate sense of relief in the short term but in the long term, they are not effective for coping/dealing with the actual source of anxiety.
- Sometimes, they can create more problems.
Topic Two

PSYCHOSEXUAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT
Psychosexual stages of development

- Freud proposed five stages of development
- At each stage in a child’s life, the drive for pleasure (the libido) centres around a particular area of the body
- Three bodily areas called erogenous zones, are intensively responsive for pleasurable stimulation
- At each stage one zone is particularly influential
Psychosexual stages of development

- Adults' personality is determined by the first 5 years of lives - the conflicts individuals are exposed to, and how they resolve them.
- Psychosexual stage theory reflects both normal and abnormal personality development.
- The stages and the conflicts at each stage are universal, but the specific instances and outcomes are each unique.
Oral Stage
1. Oral Stage

Birth to 12-18 Months

• The baby’s mouth is the focal point of pleasure
• Primary source of pleasure and tension reduction is suckling its mother’s breast and swallowing
• It later turns into biting, licking and chewing when teething starts
1. Oral Stage

- Conflict at this stage is weaning the child
- Sudden weaning creates frustration and under gratification of needs
- Prolonged weaning creates over gratification of needs and dependency
- Fixation at an early part of this stage might result in an oral incorporative personality
1. Oral Stage

- Adults fixated at this stage are excessively concerned with eating, drinking, smoking, kissing etc.
- Excessive gratification- an adult personality prone to unusual optimism and dependency
- He/she is overly gullible, believe anything and trust others extremely
1. Oral Stage

- They are labelled as **oral passive/ oral receptive personality types** (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
- Later at this stage the child begins to develop teeth and bite
- Fixation at this period is referred to as **oral aggressive/ oral sadistic personality**
1. Oral Stage

- In adulthood—characterized by excessive pessimism, hostility, sarcasm and aggression
- Such individuals behave in an orally aggressive manner, yelling, swearing and making cruel remarks towards others
- If conflict with weaning is resolved, infant will develop basic skills to cope with conflicts at later stages (Carducci, 2009)
2. Anal Stage

12-18 months until 3 years

• The source of pleasure is the reduction of tension by urinating and defecating

• The child obtains pleasure from expelling faeces and then retaining faeces during toilet training

• As parents start toilet training and regulates this tension reduction, a conflict arises
2. Anal Stage

- Strict and harsh demand for neatness will mean the child holding back defecating.
- Fixation will create an adult with anal retentive personality.
- In adulthood- compulsive, overly neat, rigid, never messy, orderly, punctual, stingy, holding back and not giving to others, stubborn, hoards things, and overly conscientious.
2. Anal Stage

- Children who receive little attention achieve little control and grow up to be sloppy and dirty
- Fixation - an adult with an anal aggressive/anal sadistic personality (anal expulsive)
- In adulthood - very messy and disorderly, hostile, cruel, destructive, throwing temper tantrums and being anger–prone
Phallic Stage
3. Phallic Stage

4 years to 5/6 years

• The erogenous zone moves to the genital region

• Both sexes show interest in their genitals but their course of personality development differ (Carducci, 2009)

• The girl believes she has lost her penis, while the boy believes he will lose his
3. Phallic Stage

• The boy child becomes envious of his father as he falls in love with his mother.
• He then begins to experience feelings of castration anxiety.
• Freud call this love triangle involving the child and his parents the Oedipus complex.
3. Phallic Stage

• Sexual desire for mother is repressed as a way of resolving this Oedipus conflict

• Unresolved conflict results in a **male phallic personality** - impulsive, vain, and self-assured

• Men try to assert their masculinity through activities such as repeated sexual conquests
3. Phallic Stage

- The girl realises that boys have a penis while she does not, resulting in penis envy
- She turns to her father and sees her mother as her rival - called Electra complex
- Conflict is resolved when the girl identifies with her mother and incorporates her characteristic behaviours, values and attitudes (Carducci, 2009)
3. Phallic Stage

- Inability to resolve this Electra conflict can result in a female **phallic personality**
- Characterized by
  a) dominance and aggression towards men such as privately or publicly humiliating them
  b) having multiple sexual partners, symbolic of obtaining a penis
3. Phallic Stage

- Phallic personality - have difficulty establishing mature heterosexual relationships
- Function well, if they receive continual recognition and appreciation of their attractive and unique qualities
- Feel inadequate and inferior when this is absent
4. Latency Stage

Age 5-6 Years to Puberty/Adolescence

• A reduction in the overall activity level of psychic energy (Carducci, 2009)

• Children begin to form same sex peer relationships and engage in age appropriate games and other group activities
4. Latency Stage

- There is little psychological development and there is lack of sexual conflicts (Larsen & Buss, 2008)
- **Sex energy is dormant and sublimated in socially valued activities** (Schultz and Schultz, 2005)
- The child learns skills necessary to take on the role of an adult (Larsen & Buss, 2008)
5. Genital Stage

Adolescence- Adulthood

• Sexual energy is back to the genitals
• Sexual objects are peers of about the same age
• A person cares about the well-being of a loved one more than him/herself
• There is normally long lasting relationship with some ending up in marriage
5. Genital Stage

- Adolescent tries to conform to societal norms and sanctions concerning sexual expression
- Conflict is minimized through sublimation (e.g. work) and later, through a committed relationship with the opposite sex
- Thus, the genital personality type finds satisfaction in love and work (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
Conclusion

• Each psychosexual stages presents unconscious conflicts the individual has to resolve
• Successful resolution results in a healthy personality
• Unsuccessful resolution results in an unhealthy personality, having emotional and behavioural problems
Conclusion

• E.g. of maladaptive personalities are:
  • 1. Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD) believed to result from strict and excessive toilet training at the anal stage
  • 2. Alcoholism- fixation at the oral stage
  • 3. Dissociative identity disorder- believed to be associated with repressed unresolved sexual urges and experiences at the phallic stage (Carducci, 2009)
Topic Three

NEO-FREUDIANS
Neo–Freudians

• Some of Freud’s followers and other psychologists disagreed with him:
  • 1. On the excessive emphasis on unconscious sexual motives and aggression
  • 2. That adult personality is shaped by early childhood experiences
  • 3. On his failure to acknowledge social and cultural influences
Neo–Freudians

- These psychologists became known as Neo-Freudians
- They include Alfred Adler, Carl Jung and Karen Horney
- Other contemporary psychoanalytic psychologist- Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm Harry Stack Sullivan, Anna Freud and Otto Rank
Neo–Freudians

Alfred Adler (1870-1937)

- He believed that the main driving force behind personality is a “strive for superiority”
- Each individual is born with a sense of inferiority
- We are born small, weak, helpless and powerless and so we strive for superiority to overcome these deficiencies
However, each individual chooses a different pathway to superiority which produces a unique style of behaviour for each person.

Inferiority complex develops if we are unsuccessful in our strive.

Adler also theorised about parenting and birth order.

Read and discuss this in tutorials.
Carl Jung (1875-1961)

• Jung believed there was more to the unconscious than Freud proposed

• That individuals possessed both
  – a personal unconscious and
  – a collective unconscious
Neo–Freudians

• *Personal unconscious* - a mental storehouse for motives, conflicts, feelings and memories repressed into the unconscious because they are threatening

• *Collective unconscious* - a storehouse for unconscious ideas and images shared by all human and similar across time and culture
Neo–Freudians

• Collective unconscious is made up of archetype (ARKEY-types)

• Read more about archetypes and discuss at tutorials
Karen Horney (HORN-eye) (1885-1952)

- Felt Freud placed too much emphasis on sexual conflicts
- She believed that conflicts resulted from inadequate child-rearing experiences, rather than id impulses
Neo–Freudians

• E.g. a child who feels loved and secure will not experience any conflict and will have a positive personality dominating.

• However, parental harshness, indifference or over protection will result in a loss of confidence in parental love.

• Becoming anxiously insecure becomes a source of all conflicts (Lahey, 2001)
• Horney disagreed with Freud on the causes of neurosis –

• **Read more about this and discuss at tutorials**

• She identified 3 ways of interacting with the world  
  1) Moving towards others,  
  2) Moving away from others or  
  3) Moving against others

• **Read more about this and discuss at tutorials**
Assignment

Evaluating Freud’s theory of personality

• Independent reading - Read this and discuss during tutorials
END OF SESSION 2 Part 2
References

• Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd