

Psychodynamic perspective, led by Sigmund Freud, emerged in first half of 20th century. It is a wide group of theories that emphasize the power of mind by focusing on the influence of instinctual drives and the importance of developmental experiences in shaping human behavior and personality. The disciples of Freud, neo-Freudians, Ego Analysts, and Object Relation theorists, used Freud's theories and led to new directions. However, just like Freud, his disciples emphasized importance of childhood experiences that reflect our present thoughts and feelings. Among his followers, Alfred Adler particularly focused on importance of childhood experiences as Adler's theories are based on the assumption that people's present self are the produce of the past. Both Freud and Adler shared many similarities in their theories as Adler advocated theories of Freud, founding father of psychodynamic perspective, to develop his own theories.

Freud viewed that much behavior are controlled by processed outside people's awareness which are structured by previous memories. He proposed a model consisting of three major parts, of the forces that make up our personality. According to his theory of personality, our personality is a product of a constant battle between Id, pleasure principle, and Superego, moral principle, which produces Ego, reality principle, to balance Id and Superego. Id, primitive principle present at birth, is life instincts, which according to Freud are Eros and Thanatos. At first, an infant would behave according to his or her Id than later learns the rule of society and family that blocks fulfillment of his or her instinct drives. Thus as one mature, one would learn to balance Id and Superego, and create a personality based on ego which mediate between the Id, Superego, and environment.

According to Freud, Ego would use defense mechanisms to make people go on with daily life such as regression. Regression, one of the defense mechanism, suggest that our present behavior is shaped by our past experiences as people would return to the behaviors that are characteristic of an earlier stage of development due to anxiety and stress.

Freud also emphasized the influence of childhood experience on human behavior using his model of psychosexual stages. According to Freud, people experience changes in the Id's urge as we pass through different stages of life, which cause changes in the Id's urge for pleasure and satisfaction. Freud viewed that our psyches would mostly develop as we learn to deal with various psychosexual stages, especially in first three stages. As a young child, one will go through developmental experiences, which shift pleasure to different erogenous zones leading to present behaviors and personality. If conflicts at the early psychosexual stages are not resolved, one would suffer fixation, an incomplete release of drive energy associated with a particular stage of development. For example, people may be anal retentive, a person seeking for compulsive neatness, or anal expulsive, a person sloppy and self indulgent, from their experiences with toilet training in anal stage. In same respect, if one has difficulties, such as a problem with identification, at phallic stage, one may suffer Oedipus complex and inability to form a love relationship. Therefore, Freud believed that it is important to resolve these conflicts, which suggests that he placed importance on childhood experience as determining factor of our present self.

Adler also agreed on the importance of childhood experiences yet developed different theories as he placed more emphasis on social factors while

Freud placed greater emphasis on sexual drives. Adler viewed that our behavior is the result of feelings of inferiority during the childhood. As a child, one will feel inferior to the adults or to other children when one is physically or mentally inferior, challenged, to others. He viewed that one would drive him or herself for better position than how one felt about self, causing drive for compensation. In other words, the life is a conscious struggle to move from "felt minus" to "felt plus" as one feels the urge to rise above own inferiority and to become "superior" to what one was in the past. When one does not resolve his feelings of inferiority, one will have superiority complex, exaggerating oneself. When one fails to resolve the feelings evoked by childhood experiences of helplessness, one would develop superiority complex, a response to feelings of inferiority complex, which one would attempt to mask weakness by adopting an attitude of exaggerated self-importance. Thus, his theory of what we are today clearly emphasizes the importance of early childhood experiences as one will drive oneself to be better than what one used to be in the past. Adler also emphasized the importance of birth order. He theorized that the first born child in a family would have different upbringing compared to second, last, or only child in a family. Birth order, according to Adler, would create different personalities in later life, as children would face sibling rivalry, the jealousy and consequent emotion contest experienced by brothers and sisters to gain affection of parents. He viewed that the first born child would mature into an independent person whereas the youngest child would mature into a more dependent person as parents would put different expectations to the children and children would try to win affection of parents over other siblings. To Adler, thus, our behavior is the product of drive for compensation and struggle to reach "healthy" state, which is unmarred

by either superiority or inferiority complex.

Although Freud and Adler emphasized different drives as the main cause of our behavior, both shared same assumption that our behavior is greatly influenced by our childhood experiences. Freud and Adler both recognized unconscious yet placed different emphasis on influence of unconscious. While Freud believed that a person's psyche would be fully developed at early stage of life and stops at Genital stage, Adler believed that a person would continue to develop with growth process. He viewed that people would turn into more "healthy" individual with changes as the whole life is constant struggle between felt minus and felt plus. While Freud viewed that sexual intercourse or sexual trauma at the early childhood would govern the present behavior and personality, Adler placed more emphasis on social factors such as social interactions and self-esteem. Unlike Freud, Adler believed that the society and how one views oneself would also play key role in development than one sexual trauma as people would try to overcome their inferiorities to the society or parents at the childhood. Although their theories are somewhat different from each other due to different emphasis on sexual and social factors, both Freud and Adler agreed on many things. They emphasized the importance of childhood experiences in their theory as both used their own childhood experiences to develop theory of personality. Freud and Adler's theories are all deeply rooted on their own childhood experiences, which therefore explain why they placed so much emphasis on childhood experiences on present behavior. As they used their own experiences to explain the present behaviors, both suffer modern criticism over validity of their theories. Freud, especially, had biased assumption over gender as he theorized that all girls would envy penis, male organ,

which proved to be wrong. Also both had cultural bias in their theory as they used their own case to explain their theories. As both are raised in European family and Victorian society, their theories thus raise question whether their theory can be applied generally or not.

Although psychodynamic theories are used frequently, they lack in several ways as they try to seek conclusion from qualitative study rather than from scientific studies. Both theories are reduction from childhood experiences, which ignore the importance of other factors. Also, both theories cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed, as they cannot be measured scientifically. Their theories are based on case studies which are biased and have no control over the situation and too small samples to validate them. However, despite these limitations, Freud and Adler's psychodynamic theories are widely claimed and play an important role in present psychology as they seek "big picture" of mind, which therefore emphasize the self-knowledge. It is true that both theorists are criticized by modern psychology and they may not explain all of our present personalities as it has limitations. However, Freud and Adler's theories clearly show the influence of childhood experience on human behavior and that our behavior and personality is the product of our past.