5.7 The Psychodynamic Approach: Tripartite Personality and Psychosexual Stages: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Outline the anal stage of psychosexual development.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Define fixation and give an example of its adult effects.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Define displacement and give a worked example.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Discuss the psychodynamic approach's explanation of personality development.

(Total for Question 4 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.7 The Psychodynamic Approach: Tripartite Personality and Psychosexual Stages: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

gives the typical age range and focus, e.g. 1 to 3 years, pleasure from bowel and bladder control during toilet training oe	**B1**
states a fixation outcome, e.g. anal-retentive traits such as obsessiveness and tidiness, or anal-expulsive traits such as messiness and rebelliousness oe	**B1**

Answer: Anal stage, about 1 to 3 years, focused on bowel and bladder control and toilet training. Fixation can produce anal-retentive traits like obsessiveness and tidiness or anal-expulsive traits like disorganisation and rebelliousness.

Question 2

defines fixation as the failure to resolve the conflicts of a psychosexual stage, causing libido to remain attached to that stage oe	**M1**
gives an example, e.g. fixation at the oral stage leading to adult oral behaviours such as smoking, dependency or overeating oe	**A1**
explains why this is called fixation: the individual remains psychologically tied to early needs and ways of seeking pleasure from that stage oe	**A1**
brief evaluation link, e.g. notes that the idea links early experience to adult personality but is hard to test empirically oe	**A1**

Answer: Fixation is a failure to resolve a psychosexual stage, leaving libido attached to that stage. For example, fixation at the oral stage may result in adult behaviours such as smoking, dependency or overeating because the person remains psychologically tied to oral gratification. This is called fixation because development is arrested and early needs continue to influence adult behaviour. The concept links childhood experience to adult personality but is difficult to test objectively.

Question 3

defines displacement as redirecting an impulse or emotion from its original source to a substitute target considered less threatening oe	**M1**
gives a worked example, e.g. an employee angry with their manager goes home and shouts at their partner or kicks a door oe	**A1**
explains that this illustrates displacement because the emotion is shifted from the real source to a safer target to avoid direct conflict oe	**A1**

Answer: Displacement is redirecting an impulse or emotion from its original source to a substitute target considered less threatening. For example, an employee angry with their manager may go home and shout at their partner; the anger is displaced onto a safer target to avoid confronting the manager.

Question 4

Level 4 Knowledge of Freud's psychodynamic theory is accurate and detailed, covering the unconscious, id/ego/superego, defence mechanisms and psychosexual stages. Evaluation is thorough and balanced, integrating strengths and weaknesses with clear reasoning. Application and examples are used appropriately to support points. The answer is coherent and uses specialist terminology effectively.	**13-16**
Level 3 Knowledge is mostly accurate with some detail on key features of the psychodynamic approach. Evaluation is present and relevant but may be less developed or one-sided. There is some use of examples and application, and the answer is generally clear and organised.	**9-12**
Level 2 Knowledge of the psychodynamic approach is limited or partial. Evaluation is superficial or undeveloped, with limited integration of strengths and weaknesses. Examples or application may be brief or only partly relevant. Structure and use of terminology may be inconsistent.	**5-8**
Level 1 Very limited knowledge and little or no evaluation. Answers may be descriptive lists with little coherence. Specialist terminology is sparse or used incorrectly.	**1-4**
Level 0 No creditable content.	**0**

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Indicative content:

- AO1: Key features to describe include the role of the unconscious in motivating behaviour, the tripartite personality (id, ego, superego) and their conflicts, ego defence mechanisms such as repression, denial and displacement, and the five psychosexual stages with the concepts of fixation, Oedipus and Electra complexes.
- AO1: Explain how the ego uses defence mechanisms to manage anxiety caused by conflicts between id impulses and the superego's demands, with brief examples of each mechanism to show application.
- AO1: Outline psychosexual stages in sequence: oral, anal, phallic (including Oedipus and Electra complexes), latency and genital, and how unresolved conflicts cause fixation affecting adult personality.
- AO3: Strength - explanatory power: the theory links early experience to adult personality and provides a comprehensive framework for understanding a range of behaviours and mental difficulties, which has influenced psychotherapy, especially psychoanalysis and techniques like dream interpretation and free association.
- AO3: Strength - clinical application: psychoanalytic ideas inspired therapeutic approaches that aim to make the unconscious conscious, which some patients find helpful and which influenced later therapeutic developments.
- AO3: Limitation - scientific status: many concepts are unfalsifiable and rely on interpretations that cannot be empirically tested, reducing the approach's scientific credibility.
- AO3: Limitation - reliance on case studies: Freud's evidence came largely from individual clinical case studies such as Little Hans and Dora, which offer rich detail but are unrepresentative and open to researcher bias.
- AO3: Limitation - overemphasis on sexuality and childhood determinism: critics argue Freud overstates the role of sexual drives and early childhood in determining adult personality, neglecting social and cultural influences and later experiences.
- AO3: Limitation - cultural and gender bias: Freud's theories reflect Victorian-era patriarchy and may be culturally specific; concepts like penis envy have been criticised as sexist and not generalisable.
- AO3: Balance/alternative explanations: other approaches, such as behaviourism and cognitive theories, offer more testable mechanisms and emphasise learning and cognition; however, they may lack Freud's depth in explaining internal conflict and unconscious motives.
- AO3: Overall judgement might weigh the theory's historical importance and clinical utility against its methodological and scientific weaknesses, concluding that it remains influential but limited as a scientific account of personality development.

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