The implications of Freudian psychoanalytic theory on managerial behavior : A critical study

Ramona Birău, Ph.D.

Regional Public Finances General Directorate of Craiova, Romania

birauramona@yahoo.com

Gabriel Birău, M.Ed.

National College "Tudor Arghezi", Tg-Cărbuneşti, Romania

gabirau@yahoo.com

Abstract

The fundamental aim of this article is to highlight the implications of Freudian psychoanalytic theory on managerial behavior. It is of high importance to understand the phenomenology of the human mind before even consider that management is a skill that can be accurately learned. Nevertheless, this research represents a modern perspective of the revolutionary and controversial Freudian theory in order to provide a more suitable understanding of consciousness and unconscious. Moreover, this interdisciplinary approach suggests the current relevance of psychoanalysis based on its significant implications on managerial behavior. The procedural detachment from the economic area is gradually individualized due to exhaustive theoretical exposure.

Key words *:* Freudian psychoanalysis, managerial behavior, short-term earnings, long-term value maximisation, ethical culture, phenomenology of the human mind

Introduction

This research aims to highlight the complex implications of Freudian psychoanalytic theory on managerial behavior. Traditional management argues that the manager has certain fundamental qualities such as : intuition, common sense, innate talents, attitudes, values, charisma and strengths, ie particular aspects affecting the personality of the manager. However, this approach is rather insufficient for modern management strategies. The ongoing interest in the Freudian psychoanalytic theory reached an interdisciplinary dimension due to the complex influences on human behavior.

A theoretical approach on managerial behavior

Kotler (2000) discussed the issue of effective organizational arrangements considering that : "Top management is ultimately accountable for the success of new products. New product development requires senior management to define business domains, product categories, and specific criteria." In this respect, the author suggests the importance of marketing management as an indispensable tool of bussines performance. Moreover, Kotler (2000) revealed that : "After management is satisfied with functional and psychological performance, the product is ready to be dressed up with a brand name and packaging, and put to a market test." Peter Drucker (1986) also known in literature as the the father of modern management, suggested that : "Management is a social function and embedded in a culture - a society - a tradition of values, customs, and beliefs, and in governmental and political systems. Management is - and should be - culture-conditioned; but, in turn, management and managers shape culture and society." According to Boone and Kurtz (1987) management represents : "the use of people and other resources to accomplish objectives".

Synthetically, management is the process of recognizing values, achieving organizational objectives and clarifying ideas based on certain strategies. However, is inevitably emphasized the importance of necessary competence and appropriate attitude in order to understand and appreciate the human perspective beyond the acquired managerial skills.

McFarland (1958) defines management as "a process, by which managers create, direct, maintain, and operate purposive organizations through systematic, coordinated, cooperative human effort." According to Caproni and Arias (1997), in the recent past, managerial skills training has become an increasingly important part of management education. Analogically, Drucker (1986) stated that managers and management are the necessary tools to make "institutions perform responsibly, autonomously and on a high level of achievement".

In the revised edition (2006) of *The Effective Executive,* Drucker suggested certain fundamental practices regarding business effectiveness that can be and is recommended to be learned, ie :

- Managing time

- Choosing what to contribute to the organization

- Knowing where and how to mobilize strength for best effect

- Setting the right priorities

- Knitting all of them together with effective decision-making.

Sadler–Smith, Hampson, Chaston and Badger (2003) suggested that : "Considerable effort has been devoted to identifying the general characteristics of entrepreneur; however, much of this has been conducted from a trait–based rather than from a behavioral perspective." Drucker (2006) argued that "great managers may be charismatic or dull, generous or tightfisted, visionary or numbers oriented".

Practically, beyond any meaning, management involves several processes strictly based on an interpersonal approach, such as understanding, empathizing, motivating, analyzing and communicating with other people. The previous definition is valid even more in the case of business managers focused on maximizing profit and increase company market value. In other words, economic knowledge is fundamental but maybe not enough especially in terms of globalization. Nevertheless, a manager is not always identify himself in the general characteristics of a psychologist or psychoanalyst. On the contrary, statistics reveals that the related psychological substrate is frequently ignored in business management due to certain factors (financial, cultural, organizational and so on) especially for SMEs. For example, developing countries still provide a considerable insight considering traditional management directions. The strategic analysis is very fine considering the significant distinction between a multinational company in a developed country and a small firm in a developing country. Practically, the management approach of large international corporations rely mainly on systematic research using modern methods and techniques. In other words, management science outweigh the management as art. The very idea of management differ considerably in these cases. Moreover, the basic contribution on managerial self-development is frequently obscured by trivial issues drawn from routine. However, in most senses ideal management skills should include a complementary side based on psychology (psychoanalysis) in order to achieve performance.

Freudian psychoanalytic theory and its implications

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was the founder of psychoanalysis and his theories still continue to influence various fields of modern knowledge. Freud provided a revolutionary approach of the human psyche based on individual (clinical) case studies. Beyond the inherent subjectivity, The basic idea was to generalize the findings in order to achieve a certain level of understanding in order to build a generally valid theoretical structure. Nevertheless the analysis of behavioral patterns is extremely complex and involves considerable time study. Freud's theories were strongly influenced by his studies and diversified knowledge in medicine (neurology, psychiatry) and biology. His approach was very unconventional and controversial considering the empirical basis. Freud's main activity was focused on investigating highly sensitive issues such as mental disorders and emotional biases based on innovative methods of psychotherapy.

The definition of psychoanalysis achieve complex meanings but deeply rooted in psychological theory in order to investigate mental biases arising from the mutual influence of conscious and unconscious structures of the human mind. Broadly defined, psychoanalysis represents a procedural method for investigating unconscious mind based on clinical experiences and knowledge obtained during psychotherapy sessions. Moreover, the fine boundary between conscious and unconscious psychological processes is a key element in psychoanalysis.

Freud was a true promoter of the dissemination between conscious and unconscious mind. Freudian psychoanalytic theory allocates significant effort in order to investigate the holes of human personality along with their major implications. The conscious mind represents the rational dimension and includes sensations, emotions, perceptions, houghts, memories, feelings, hopes, fantasies ie aspects of perfectly current awareness. Moreover, the preconscious mind is a somewhat complementary component and represents ordinary memory whose information can always be restored into consciousness. In addition, those latent ideas, mental patterns and hidden awareness may reappear and reside at some later moment of time.

Freud argued that the unconscious continues to influence human behavior and experience even if the person does not realize the significance of certain underlying influences. The unconscious mind includes a conglomerate of feelings, memories, thoughts, emotions which exceeds the conscious awareness. According to Freud (1913) : "Unconscious wishes are always active and ready for expression whenever they find an opportunity to unite themselves with an emotion from conscious life, and that they transfer their greater intensity to the lesser intensity of the latter." Freudian psychology revolves around the concept of unconscious. The author also suggested that dream represents s a psychical phenomenon of full value which accomplished a very interesting purpose, ie the fulfilment of a wish. Beyond the highly complicated intellectual

activity psychical forces are responsible for the distortion of the dream. In this regard, Freud (1913) revealed that : " It should not be left unmentioned that children sometimes show complex and more obscure dreams, while, on the other hand, adults will often under certain conditions show dreams of an infantile character." Freud also describes how human personality develops during childhood based on psychological forces. However, the anxiety generates distortion phenomena in Freud's acceptance. Moreover, it is discussed the idea of distortion of dreams or disfigurement of dreams as an generalisations form of transfer caused by waking life's unfulfillments.

According to De Sousa (2011) it is very important to properly perceive psychoanalytical psychotherapy and its contribution to a better understanding of body-mind dualism and consciousness as a whole. Bucci (2000) argued that : "Cognitive science has incorporated seminal concepts of psychoanalysis without acknowledging this influence…". Moreover the author concluded that "scientific psychology requires a subfield of psychoanalytic psychology that covers the integration of information-processing functions, including somatic and emotional processes, in the context of an individual's overall goals". Ahmed (2012) stated that Freudian psychology is largely based on objects that are guided by needs, such as hunger, thirst, the avoidance of pain and sex.

Conclusions

A very interesting dilemma is whether the conscious mind has the most significant influence on human behavior. The human perceptions and awareness are based on interaction with the environment being translated into constructive behavior because of some rational choices. On the other hand, the preconscious is strongly influenced by unconscious mind, issue that degenerates in affecting consciousness. A rhetorical question is considering whether it is possible the complete dissociation of the personality of the manager along with his potential behavioral holes. Thus, management process should be focused on in achieving business excellence, effective communication within the organization and complex decision-making process.

References

1. Ahmed, S., (2012) *Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory Oedipus complex: A critical study with reference to D. H.*, Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers", Ideal College, Sylhet, Bangladesh, Internal journal of English and literature Vol. 3(3), pp. 60-70, ISSN 2141-2626
2. Boone, L.E., Kurtz, D.L., (1987) *Management*, Random House, Business Division, Pennsylvania State University, 677 pages, ISBN 0394363051, 9780394363059

3. Bucci, W., (2000), *The Need for a "Psychoanalytic Psychology" in the Cognitive Science Field*, Psychoanalytic Psychology, Vol. 17, No 2, pp. 203-224 Educational Publishing Foundation

4. Caproni, P.J, Arias, M.E. (1997) *Managerial Skills Training from a Critical Perspective*, Journal of Management Education, vol. 21 no. 3, pp. 292-308

5. De Sousa, A., (2011) *Freudian Theory and Consciousness: A Conceptual Analysis*, Mens Sana Monogr., vol. 9 (1): pp. 210–217.

6. Drucker, F. P (1986) *Management : Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*, Truman Talley Books, E.P. Dutton, New York, 553 pages, ISBN 0-525-24463-8

7. Drucker, F. P (2006) *The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done*, Series Harperbusiness Essentials, Paperback, Publisher : HarperBusiness, Revised edition, pp. 208, ISBN-10: 0060833459, ISBN-13: 978-0060833459

8. Freud, S. (1913), *Interpretation of Dream*, 3rd edition. Translation in English by A. A. Brill, New York: The Macmillan Company

9. Kotler, P. (2000) *Marketing Management: Millennium Edition*, 10 edition, Prentice Hall PTR, 456 pp., ISBN 0130172871, 9780130172877

10. McFarland, D.E., (1958) *Management: Principles and Practices*, Macmillan, Industrial management, New York, 612 pages

11. Sadler–Smith, E., Hampson, Y., Chaston, I., Badger, B., (2003) *Managerial behavior, entrepreneurial style, and small firm performance*, Journal of Small Business Management, Vol. 41, issue 1, pp. 47-67

12. Tewari, R., Sharma, R., (2011) *Managerial Skills for Managers in the 21st Century*, Management, Vol. 1, No. 3, July – September, 2011, Social Science Electronic Publishing, Inc.