### THE UNCONSCIOUS THINKING PROCESSES OF STUDENTS

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To my mother Ruhlete Kuldaş

### AKNOWLEDGMENT

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Without their exertion to support me, I would have never come this far.

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors underlying thinking processes of master degree students, with regard to their demographical factors, in the Faculty of Education at University Technology Malaysia. It was to enhance an understanding of how students' thinking processes work from the perspective of Freudian unconscious mind theory that every psychic action starts unconsciously. An exploratory research with quantitative and qualitative methods was conducted on 314 cases. The factors underlying students' thinking processes were identified by a maximum likelihood extraction method of exploratory factor analysis with direct oblimin-Kaiser Normalization. Three extracted factors solution namely "Rationalization," "Repression," and "Unconscious association," were displayed having an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.92. These factors were explaining well enough the total variance by the value of 58.1%. Each extracted factor met the requirement of being a factor by loading size of 0.4 and above in rotated pattern matrix. An independent samples t-test and a one-way ANOVA between groups provided no significant differences between "Males and Females," "Malay and Non-Malay," "Muslim and Non-Muslim," and between "Age Groups" on the factors underlying their thinking processes. A Chi-square test for independence yielded no significant relationship between the groups of Gender, Age, Ethnic, Religion and their made choices. Comments from the respondents showed interesting indication on the students' thinking processes based on the unconscious desirable and undesirable thoughts. These findings indicated that the ways the students engaged in their thinking activities were quite the same based on the tested variables. It implies that the factors underlying students' thinking processes could be related to the other elements out of their conscious awareness. Accordingly, several suggestions and recommendations were provided for future references especially in explaining the students' thinking processes further.

#### ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengentahui faktor-faktor yang mendasari proses pemikiran pelajar Ijazah di Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, dengan memerhatikan faktor-faktor demografi mereka, untuk meningkatkan pemahaman tentang bagaimana proses fikiran pelajar berfungsi dari perspektif teori Freudian fikiran tak sadar menegaskan bahawa setiap tindikan psikik bermula secara. Sebuah kajian eksplorasi dengan kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif dilakukan pada 314 kes. Faktor-faktor yang mendasari proses pemikiran pelajar dikenalpasti dan di factor analisis dengan kaedah pemecahan dan serupa maksimum normalisisi oblimin-Kaiser langsung. Tiga faktor penyelesaian dikenalpasti iaitu "Rasionalisasi," "Repressi," dan kaitan bawah sedar memaparkan nilai eigenvalue lebih besar dari 1.0 dengan dengan nilai Cronbach alpha 0.92. Factor-farktor ini menjelaskan dengan baik jumlah variansi sebanyak 58.1 %. Setiap factor yang dikenalpasti memenuhi syarat-syarat menjadi factor dengan memuatkan saiz 0.4. dan di atas matriks corak penggantian. Ujian t-test tidak bersan dardan ANOVA tidak menunjukkan perbezaan yang ketara antara "Lelaki dan Wanita," "Melayu dan Bukan-Melayu," kumpulan "Muslim dan Bukan-Muslim," dan antara "Umur," pada faktor-faktor yang mendasari proses pemikiran mereka. Ujian Chi-square juga tidak menunjukkan hubungan yang ketara antara kumpulan jantina, umur, etnik, agama dan pilihan yang dilakukan. Walaubagaimanapun, komen daripada responden menunjukkan petanda yang menarik bekenaan dengan proses pemikiran mereka berdasarkan pemikiran bawah sedar dan tidak dikehandaki. Dapatan ini menggambarkan proses pemikiran pelajar berada dalam keadaan yang hampir serupa dengan mengambilkira variablevaribable yang diuji. Ini membayangkan bahawa faktor yang mendasari proses berfikir pelajar boleh dikaitkan dengan unsur-unsur lain dari kesedaran mereka. Oleh itu beberapa cadangan dikemukakan kepada sesiapa yang ingin mendalami proses pemikiran pelajar lebih lanjut.

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#### CHAPTER 1

#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0.** Introduction

One of the main purposes of education is to change and develop the ways by which students think and behave. This purpose considers students as those who are capable of controlling their cognitive and behavioral activities, as who are consciously aware of thinking and learning processes. Therefore, students are required to learn consciously how to think in order to perform their cognitive activities satisfactorily. However, most of the thinking and learning activities are very complex for conscious processes of the human mind and human memory to discern, but not for their unconscious processes. Thus, psychologists propose instructors considering students as ones who learn not only consciously but also unconsciously, so that more satisfactorily results may be produced.

Thinking and learning are being practiced by reasoning, making decisions, solving problems (Skinner, 1989; Wang and Ruhe, 2007), and giving meanings to daily life (Moseley *et al.*, 2005; Paul *et al.*, 2008) as the process of editing, rearranging, and examining the world (Moore, 2005; Hoare, 2006). Hence, the more students know both conscious and unconscious processes of thinking and learning, the better they optimize their thought and behavior. Thinking processes of students mediate the effects of teaching and learning in class (Marland and Edwards, 1986). The efficiency of thinking is being improved by teaching students how to think (Goodrum, 1979; Borich, 1996; Smith, 2003; Anat, 2004; Yaman, 2005; Çubukcu, 2006), because students learn well while thinking well (Hall *et al.*, 2008).

In educational context, thinking is conceived as a disposition and aim-focused or consciously goal-directed cognitive process (Ertepinar, 1995; Çubukcu, 2006; Moore, 2005). Educational psychologists assume that students are conscious of the relationship between their skills, tasks, and the demands made by their school. Students are seen as capable partners who think along with their teachers (Luc *et al.*, 2001; Moseley *et al*, 2005). Accordingly, instructional varieties offer students conscious learning (Borich, 1996) and strategies that may make them active participants in their learning processes (Eggen and Kauchak, 1998; Kosnin, 2007; Slavin, 2003, 2009).

Thinking refers to the development of higher order thinking as a distinct educational goal not just for students but also for teachers (Smith, 2003; Anat, 2004), because explaining one's thinking to another mutually leads to consciously cognitive processing (Sullivan, 1998). Teachers and students affect each other's behaviors at the underlying processes of thinking (Robertson, 1999), which are asserted to be mostly unconscious or relatively conscious (Freud, 1915c; Moseley *et al.*, 2005).

According to Freud (1915b), the unconscious is the real cause underlying thinking processes. The unconscious refers to the memory of prior events, experiences, emotions, and feelings that may or may not be available for conscious awareness (Roeckelein, 2006). Thinking and making inferences, relied on students' experiences, are conceived as "learning," if their experiences change their behavior (Slavin, 2003, 2009). Experience and learning are cumulative processes in life. Therefore, vicissitudes of one's experiences are proposed not only to be leaned on past and present conscious, but also on unconscious experiences.

As a result, thinking and learning processes are considered as derivative of consciousness, while past studies showed that learning and thinking processes are also derivative of unconscious processes. Most traditional approaches consider students as they are conscious learners, who are aware of their thinking and learning processes, but the unconscious side of their thinking, which is proposed to be more effective, are neglected (Thompson, 2004; Hoare, 2006; Meissner, 2008). This negligence results in inability to deal with teaching students how to think (Debono,

1983; Borich, 1996). It indicates that teaching and learning processes can be improved, if unconscious processes are taken into consideration.

This study used a close-ended questionnaire based on a word-stimuli in order to investigate what factors might underlie thinking processes of students, particularly unconscious factors of thinking. Students were required to make a choice, stating and justifying their reasons. This was done in order to reveal the factors that may have affected them when they made a choice.

### 1.1. Problem Background

In terms of education, thinking is composed of aim focused cognitive processes such as reasoning, problem solving, decision making, and justification which are the universal goals of education in teaching students how to think (Borich, 1996; Gray *et al.*, 1999; Smith, 2003; Anat, 2004; Moseley *et al.*, 2005). Reviewed studies showed that students, at all levels, are not aware of the thinking processes and they have limited knowledge on how thinking can be developed (Goodrum, 1979; Marland and Edwards, 1986; Borich, 1996; Anat, 2004; Moseley *et al.*, 2005 Sladek *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, the educational goals require educators to know how thinking processes work, and how these processes can be developed, so as to recognize how learners think as well as how they behave or act (Goodrum, 1979; Marland and Edwards, 1986; Borich, 1996; Anat, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Sladek *et al.*, 2008).

Some studies have found that students are incapable of understanding complex issues; their problem solving, making decision and reasoning processes are not compatible with norms of rationality, because schools had lost sight of their role in teaching students how to think (Borich, 1996; Smith, 2003). Others suggest a right structure for teaching how to think, so as to enhance logical, structural and critical thinking skills of students (Kirkley, 2003; Jordaan and Jordaan, 2005). Moreover, educational psychologists do not have an exact claim about that if thinking is inherently rational, optimal, desirable, or even smart (Holyoak and Morrison, 2005).

Several presidential commissions in America called for a commitment to develop a "thinking curriculum" that focuses on teaching learners how to think critically, how to reason, and how to solve problems (Borich, 1996). Students are required to use these thinking activities in both the real world and educational context to gain admittance to advanced education and living opportunities (Borich, 1996). Likewise, the explicit mention of developing students' rational, critical and creative thinking has necessitated the teaching how to think in Malaysia (Nagappan, 2001). Since 1980, numerous short courses and workshops on teaching thinking such as 'Accelerated Learning', 'Optimal Learning', 'Critical and Creative Thinking' (Nagappan, 2001) have been conducted to prepare teachers and college lectures. Curriculum Development Center of Malaysia (1989) has indicated that:

"The contents of the curriculum promote the development of thinking abilities to enable students to analyze, synthesize, explain, draw conclusions, and produce ideas that are both constructive and useful. Every teacher is required to use teaching-learning methods and techniques which will stimulate, encourage, and develop the thinking abilities of students (p.6)"

The former Director-General of Malaysian Education Datuk Matnor Daim suggested that students have to learn to maneuver ideas and feelings by acquiring thinking skills, and teachers should make it their responsibility to mold students into thinking leaders (Nagappan, 2001). The Minister of Education in Malaysia (Nagappan, 2001) also stated that the education system will be revamped to encourage analytical thinking like the capacity for precise and rational thought, training in basic logic, reasoning and critical thinking as they are essential for all students. Teacher Education Division in Malaysia has proposed these five components in lessons which are (Nagappan, 2001):

- 1) introduction to content and process,
- 2) thinking about thinking,
- 3) thinking actively,
- 4) consolidation or enrichment activities,
- 5) applying thinking in all colleges in Malaysia.

Thus, students can optimize their performance by being taught how they think in their learning process, and how it affects their works (Clark and Paivio, 1991; Pavioi, 1991).

According to Paul *et al.* (1998), a cornerstone of students' thinking and learning experiences is their critical thinking skills that accord their interactions between thinking, learning, and behavior in educational and social contexts. These interactions construct past and present experiences of students (Teremzini *et al.*, 1995; Sternberg, 2003; Çubukcu, 2006), thereby imposing meaning on students' perception, belief, and understanding level of students that transcend the literal information acquired (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2003). Therefore, critical thinking is supposed to be a way to perceive the world and formulate well-reasoned meanings and conclusions (Çubukcu, 2006), which are applicable and reliable as a self-regulating processes (Kosnin, 2007).

Critical thinking is aim focused intellectual processes in available information (Paul *et al.*, 2008). According to Moore (2005), this is the kind of thinking skill to teach students how to organize and distinguish between the ways they perceive the world whereby they distinguish between guessing and estimating, believing and assuming, preferring and evaluating, supposing and hypothesizing, interfering and interfering logically, grouping and classifying, associating concept and grasping principle, noting relationship and noting relationships among relationships, offering opinions without reasons and offering opinions with reasons, and distinguishing between making judgments without criteria and making judgments with criteria. These thinking processes entail the ability to recognize the fallibility of one's own opinions (Sa *et al.*, 1999; Çubukcu, 2006), that is a kind of meta-cognition for focusing on the real problem or decision to be taken with credibility based on conscious awareness (Moore, 2005; Lovrek *et al.*, 2008).

According to Goodroom (1979), critical thinking is underlying factor of scientific thinking that is milestone of school science courses. Both, critical and scientific thinking are not separable from education (Yürümezoğlu and Oğuz, 2007).

They are developed in instructional context (Yaman, 2005) within those thinking activities which are (Teremzini*et al*, 1995; Moore, 2005):

- a) *Inference making*. It requires rational thoughts as personal beliefs about a situation based on similar associations with past experiences.
- b) *Logical thinking*. It needs an idea or assumption to arrive step-by-step at end point or solution based on previous knowledge or on acquired of patterns of thinking.
- c) *Problem solving*. It involves a problem and making decision process with steps of defining problem, collecting data, identifying obstacles to the goal (Zanga *et al*, 2004), identifying alternatives, rating alternative, and choosing the best alternative.
- Decision making. It calls for choosing the fittest response from several choices according to examining advantages and disadvantages, considering all the steps of problem solving and evaluating the final decision in relationship to available alternatives and consequences,
- e) *Interpretation.* It requires perception in examining the assumptions when making a judgment or reaching a conclusion. Perceptions are developed through associations with personal experiences and are, therefore, unique to each individual.
- f) Analysis. It examines the problem to be solved, identifies the elements of the problem, and finds relationships between the elements.

Abovementioned thinking activities are supposed to make students sophisticated thinkers who apprehend their cognitive tasks that enhance their perception of reality (Smith, 2003). According to Çubukcu (2006), definition of thinking involves some characteristics or dispositions of it as follows:

- enabling people to use information masterly and objectively,
- stating the organized thoughts in a brief,
- differentiating logically valid and invalid results,
- understanding the belief and degrees of thoughts,
- seeing vague and unclear similarities and differences,
- understanding the differences of being right and wrong,
- accepting that a problem has different ways to the solution with internally valid justifications,
- distinguishing the differences between hypotheses and assumptions,
- being sensitive towards the differences between the accuracy and strength of a belief,
- showing distinctively different aspects of a an issue without exaggerating, categorizing or changing.

Accordingly, abovementioned characteristics of thinking are aim-focused cognitive processes that can be taught directly (Çubukcu, 2006). The efficiency of these cognitive processes can certainly be improved in making students understood events, making decisions, and in solving problems (Çubukcu, 2006; Moseley *et al.*, 2005; Hoare, 2006). Thus, educational psychologists propose that students are in control of their thinking and learning processes (Borich, 1996; Luc *et al.*, 2001; Moseley *et al.*, 2005; Slavin, 2003, 2009).

However, what students think while learning (i.e. there is shifts in the level of information processing and split-attention that learners are either unaware of, or unable to articulate the reasons for them) is not revealed optimally (Marland and Edwards, 1986). In learning processes, students have tendency to react according to their needs, which guide their motivation (Moore, 2005) and influence their thinking processes (i.e. goals, preferences)in attaining desired outcomes (or avoid undesired outcomes) (Holyoak and Morrison, 2005; Moseley *et al.*, 2005). This influence is attributed to the unconscious processes (Holyoak and Morrison, 2005).

Although both contemporary and classic psychological studies have evidenced that human thinking is operated by both conscious and the unconscious processes (Freud, 1915b, 1933, 1949; Libet *et al.*, 1991; Libet, 1999; Velmans, 1999; Westen, 1999; LeDoux, 2000; Thompson, 2004; Mijolla, 2005; Kihlstrom, 2006, 2008; Moors and DeHouwer, 2006; Baumeister, and Bushman, 2008; Bargh and Morsella, 2008; Meissner 2008), the unconscious processes are constantly active or automatic (Baumeister, and Bushman, 2008), and preceding conscious one (Freud, 1915b, 1921, 1933, 1949; Libet *et al.*, 1991; Libet, 1999; LeDoux, 2000; Kihlstrom, 2006, 2008; Thurschwell, 2009). There is no evidence showing a vice versa state in favor of conscious processes (Libet, 1999; Velmans, 1999).

Conscious processes are posited to be limited in information processing, whereas the unconscious processes are limitless and accommodating the limitation of conscious processes as much as possible (Lewicki *et al.*, 1992; Churchland, 1995; Sternberg, 2003; Slavin, 2003, 2009; Bargh and Morsella, 2008, Gilholey, 2008). Accordingly, Freud (1900, 1911, 1915b, 1920b, 1933, 1940; Erdelyi, 2006) correctly recognized that every psychical act of human beings begins unconsciously that may either remain so or go on developing into consciousness. Thinking processes are instigated by the unconscious mind that makes the conscious mind relatively conscious (Freud, 1915b; Thompson, 2004) in determining whether an information is to be kept in mind or to be discharged (Slavin, 2003, 2009). In terms of social (Rerber, 1989) or formal learning, transference of information is argued to be by the unconscious processes (Robertson, 1999).

Consequently, the unconscious thinking processes can instigate learning processes to occur (Freud, 1915b, 1933; Thompson, 2004; Hoare, 2006). However, most of the instructional objectives offer to students only learning consciously (Borich; 1996) that consider students as they are conscious of their thinking and learning processes (Thompson, 2004; Hoare, 2006; Meissner, 2008). Reviewed studies show that neither the students are consciously aware of their thinking processes itself, nor the teachers perfectly possess the knowledge of how thinking works (Marland and Edwards, 1986; Thompson, 2004; Moseley *et al*, 2005). Only after an event happened, they can reflect on the outcome of their thinking, thereafter

reconstruct and analyze their thinking processes (Moseley *et al.*, 2005). Thus, educational objectives always neglect the unconscious processes, although its significant effects are observable in learning (Thompson, 2004; Hoare, 2006; Meissner, 2008). This negligence prevents educators from well understanding of how thinking process works that leads to ineffectiveness of teaching students how to think (Debono, 1983; Borich, 1996). It indicates that teaching and learning cannot be properly studied and they cannot be improved unless unconscious processes are taken into consideration (Thompson, 2004; Hoare, 2006).

### **1.2.** Problem Statement

The literature shows that students at all stages are unable to think effectively in their thinking activities (Borich, 1996; Smith, 2003). Yet, teaching students how to think is resulted in ineffectiveness. This ineffective teaching attributed to neglecting the unconscious processes in teaching and learning activities (Debono, 1983; Borich, 1996; Thompson, 2004; Holyoak and Morrison, 2005 Hoare, 2006; Meissner, 2008) and to restricted knowledge of teachers and learners on how thinking processes work and how thinking can be developed (Goodrum, 1979; Marland and Edwards, 1986; Borich, 1996; Anat, 2004; Sladek*et al.*, 2008). Freud (1915b, 1933) propounded that thinking processes work unconsciously; the unconscious is the only mental process and the real psych underlying any cognitive processes.

Therefore, this study intended to investigate how thinking processes work in the light of the unconscious factors (i.e. unconscious association, repression, rationalization) that might underlie students' thinking activities (i.e. making decision, reasoning, justifications).

### **1.3.** Purpose of Research

This research attempted to provide a lens through which one can get a better view on the question of how thinking processes work. It purposed to display the unconscious processes of thinking in a conspicuous place where instructors teach students how to think. The relationship between the unconscious factors of thinking processes and demographical factors of students was explored. It also intended to open an initiative angle view for a prospective research on the possible advantages of using the unconscious in teaching and learning contexts, for both instructors and the learners.

### 1.4. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- To investigate factors such as "unconscious association, repression, rationalization" that may underlie students' thinking activities such as "making decision, reasoning and justification."
- To determine the differences between demographical factors of the students (gender, age, ethnic, religion) at the factors (unconscious association, repression, rationalization) underlying their thinking processes.
- iii. To identify the relationship between demographical factors of the students (gender, age, ethnic, religion) and their selection of the choices (1- Career, 2- Satisfaction, 3- Career and Satisfaction).

### 1.5. Research Questions

- i. What are the factors underlying the thinking processes of students?
- ii. Is there any difference between demographical factors of the students at the factors underlying their thinking processes?
- iii. Is there any relationship between demographical factors of the students and their selection of the choices?

### 1.6. Significance of Research

A universal goal of education is teaching students how to think (Smith, 2003; Anat, 2004). The essence of education and its design is developing and disciplining the mind, hereby generating a person who thinks, acts, and behaves in plausible ways (Connell *et al.*, 1972; Tobin and Capie, 1981). Thus, the educational goal of teaching how to think necessitates to study on how thinking processes work (Goodrum, 1979; Marland and Edwards, 1986; Borich, 1996; Anat, 2004; Sladek*et al.*, 2008) in regard to unconscious and conscious factors of it.

American educational policies and educational philosophy of Malaysia consider thinking ability as an instructional necessity to be taught. American educational policies, through a commission, has recognized the importance of, "the development of the ability to think", as the central purpose of education (Niaz and Robinson, 1993). The commission called for a commitment to developing a "thinking curriculum," one that focuses on teaching learners how to think critically, reason, and problem solve in real-world context (Borich, 1996). It points at the awareness of students which is essential for thinking skills, so as to base on evidence rather than beliefs, desires, and biases, so called "scientific awareness" that has long been a goal of and quality of science education (Niaz and Robinson, 1993; Yaman,

2005; Lovrek*et al.*, 2008; Paul, 2008). For this goal, some of the Malaysian educational institutes have already formed several courses for teaching thinking skills because of the necessities (Nagappan, 2001). An aspect of educational philosophy of Malaysia is to qualify their students with high thinking ability (Curriculum Development Center, 1989; Educational Planning and Research Division, 1994; Nagappan, 2001).

Students are suggested to understand how mind works, so as to use their thinking activities effectively (Sladeket al., 2008), and to gain higher order thinking skills for being effective in their life (Kirkley, 2003). They are recommended to be familiar with essential mental activities such as memory, perception, attention, reasoning, judgment, and imagination (Smith, 2003), and to gain critical thinking skills whereby they can analyze their thinking activities as a kind of meta-cognition for focusing on a real problem or making a choice (Lovrek et al., 2008). This is because both mental and cognitive activities together support the purpose of instructional planning that is to raise conscious level of thoughts, feelings, and understandings of students (Borich, 1996), if students be familiar of their conscious and unconscious processes (Marland and Edwards, 1986; Tribus, 2004; Moseley et al., 2005). Particularly, the unconscious processes are suggested to be considered in education (Thompson, 2004), because the conscious processes are very short compared with the entire human system capacity (Dijksterhuis and Nordgren, 2006). Although, unconscious learning is difficult to be studied, its effect is amenable to scientific observation (Hoare, 2006).

### **1.7.** Scope of Research

According to literature, teaching students how to think is one of the educational goals to provide students with efficient use of their thinking abilities and learning skills. Thinking and learning processes are underlain by conscious and unconscious cognitive activities. In term of unconscious learning, a student's perception is posited to be affected by their past experiences.

Accordingly, the population of this study was the students who have already gone through educational experiences. Therefore, the samples of the study were master degree students from the Faculty of Education at University Technology Malaysia. The students' cognitive level is presupposed to be experienced conscious or unconscious processes of thinking (Freud, 1915b, 1933, 1949; Hoare, 2006). Stratified random sampling with a mix-mode method was used to find out the effects of the unconscious in thinking processes.

As a result, this study purposed to investigate what factors might affect thinking processes in selecting the choices of their reasons to study. The conscious, unconscious, and demographical factors are assumed to be effective in thinking. This study used a descriptive approach to understand whether students are affected by the factors. The choices were assumed to be unconsciously associated with desirable and undesirable thoughts that may be revealed through instrument.

#### **1.8.** Definition of Terms

Key concepts of the study are defined below, in order to familiarize the reader with their conceptual meanings for the purpose of the study. Each concept is abstract and has abundant character, hence the researchers prefer to introduce most important characters of them, rather than define them in a single character.

### i. Conscious and Conscious Processes

Conscious is the working memory itself (Churchland, 1995; LeDoux, 2000). According to Libet (1999), conscious comes after unconscious processes, hence conscious process is awareness of unconsciously initiated actions (Libet, 1999) that contain all thoughts, feelings, and perception of human beings (Freud, 1933; Statt, 2003; Larsen and Buss, 2008; Salkind, 2008). Thus, conscious processes are immediate apprehension of mental activities (Statt, 2003), and conscious is the awareness of one's being (Statt, 2003) "oneself" or "ego" (Mijolla, 2005). When the "ego" or "self" is being mentioned, then conscious is sequel of "self" because any mental action is determined by inherited archetypal forms (Fordham, 1980, 1981).

In this study, conscious and conscious processes refer to the awareness of oneself that is only able to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable (Freud, 1900, 1915c, 1920a; Mijolla, 2005), but not able to know "how to determine" and "what determines" pleasure and unpleasure one.

#### ii. Instinctual Drive

According to Freud (1915a), the whole flux of mental life bases on demands of instinctual drive. Every origin and representatives of the instinctual drives are innate in humans' physical construct and appears in their thoughts (Freud, 1915a). Instinctual drives are considered as the psychical representative of stimuli from inner process of human beings reaching the mind. It is known as a determinative demand made upon the mind, in consequence of its relation with the organism, for operation (Freud, 1915a, 1933).

### iii. The Unconscious

According to Freud (1915c, 1920b, 1933), the unconscious is the real psych, and imperfect reports of psychical operation to human beings (such as a demand of instinctual drive) that comes through the data of sensory organs (consciousness). Reported unacceptable thoughts and memories may have been pushed back or repressed because of their threatening nature to consciousness, but they still can affect any mentation (Freud, 1915c). Mentation may have inherited archetypal forms as a system that unconsciously determines any mental action (Fordham, 1980, 1981). According to Lacan (1977), a mantel action is operated through symbol-image or

mental representation that is the structure of language and the unconscious is structured like language.

This study used the concept of the unconscious that implies mentally represented psychic conflicts, which ensues from opposition of pleasure and tension, or what is desirable and undesirable. The unconscious is constantly active and dynamic factor in any mentation. It pushes back or represses unacceptable thoughts and memories, because of their threatening nature to consciousness, while they still affect any mentation (Freud, 1915c).

In this study, the concept of "the unconscious" is preferred to use instead of "unconsciousness" or "unconscious processes" (as mentioned later in the literature review) to call attention on cooperation of instinctual drives with pleasant and unpleasant past experiences stored in the mind. The researcher presumed that instinctual drives exist at the present time, but the experiences are either in the past or in present. Hence, drives are like the energy for a network of mind-body unions in which pleasant or unpleasant past experiences are associated with current experiences in the unconscious mind. This presumption refers to the assertion of Freud that the dynamic power of unconscious comes from drives and instincts on mental representation (Freud, 1915b, 1933; Haydn, 1951).

#### iv. The Unconscious Thinking Processes

Demands of humans' instinctual drive (i.e. hungry, thirst, sex, selfpreservation etc.) on their mind, to fulfilling basic needs, engender psychic energy (Freud, 1915a, 1933). Initially, humans' psychic energy ensues from their instinctual drives that determine the tendency of their thinking activities according to desired and undesired experiences in the mind (Freud, 1915b, 1933; Haydn, 1951). Later, the psychic energy derivate from both the human mind and instinctual derives as life experiences are gained. Humans' undesired experiences become propelling psychic energy, whereas their desired experiences become attractive one in each psychic activity that molds their mind-set. The mind-set can be conceived as unconscious mental attitude of people to think about their experiences with regard to what is desirable and undesirable for them.

Thus, the unconscious thinking processes can be conceived as the human unconscious mind-set that is propelled by undesired experiences and attracted by desired ones. This human unconscious mind-set determines how human beings respond to their experiences, but not what they respond to, because what desirable is can be transformed to undesirable one, and vice versa.

#### v. Unconscious Association

Instinctual drives associated with mental representation inherently that has associative nature to serve pleasurable and avoid unpleasurable experiences (Freud, 1915a; Westen, 1999, 2006; Lear, 2005). Associations do not take any particular relation to reality. Along with networks of association any information is encoded in memory and being activated unconsciously, regardless they can affect thoughts and behaviors, or they are conflictual (Westen, 1999).

According to Freud (1900), totality of sensory stimuli arouse in the mind in the first place a number of ideas which are derivative of external and internal stimuli become linked together according to the laws of association and that call up a further series of ideas (or images). Accordingly, the realities of the world are taken into consideration in thinking processes while looking for pleasure and desire-fulfillment (Freud, 1900) regardless of the limits forced by reality (Freud, 1933, Talvitie and Ihanu, 2005). Hence, it may involve repression, anxiety or rationalization that deal with unconscious processes in activities of desire-fulfillment.

#### vi. Rationalization

Rationalization is an unconscious defense to create socially acceptable reasons for an action that actually reflects unattractive motives (Salkind, 2008). In rationalization, the goal is to reduce tension by coming up with explanation for an event that is more easily acceptable than the real reason.

#### vii. Repression

Repression is conceived to be a defense processes in which one prompted to gratify basic drives immediately, and avoid undesirable experiences (Freud, 1915c). Repression is a process of preventing undesirable, repressed, and currently experienced thoughts, feeling, or urges from reaching conscious awareness.

#### viii. Thinking and Thinking Processes

Thinking is conceived to be a deliberate attention given to particular aspects of experiences (Moseley *et al.*, 2005). In educational contexts, thinking is used to mean a consciously goal-directed process (Zhang, 2006), such as imagining situations, remembering, forming concepts, considering opinions, generating new perspectives, planning behaviors, reasoning, problem solving, making decision and judgments (Gray *et al.*, 1999;Moseley *et al.*, 2005). Thus, thinking processes may be conceived as mental representation integrating the relationship between objects and experiences, and transferring them from outer world into symbols (Çubukcu, 2006), so as to reach its aim.

### **1.9.** Theoretical Framework

A basic issue in studying cognitive processes involves both conscious and unconscious factors of psychical actions. The questions to be directed in this issue is how people perceive the world, whether consciously or unconsciously; and how they practice their thinking ability to reason, make decisions, give meanings to their experiences, and examine the world. Experimental evidences show that people make associations to images, symbols or words that interplay between their attitudes, life experiences, and distinctive personality characteristic (Cohen and Swerdlik, 2010).

According to "*the unconscious mind theory of Freud*" (1900, 1911, 1915b, 1920b, 1933, 1940), that is refereed in this theoretical framework, every psychical act of human beings is instigated unconsciously. Therefore, human consciousness is relatively conscious, because it operates unconsciously started psychic actions (Freud, 1915b; Thompson, 2004). According to Freud (1915b), the unconscious mind is the real cause that underlies thinking processes, and it determines whether perceived information is to be kept in mind or to be discharged (Slavin, 2003, 2009).

According to Freud (1900), perceived information arouses a number of ideas in the human mind by the laws of association that call up a further series of ideas out of consciousness of human beings. This unconscious association refers to humans' past and present experiences (i.e. emotional or affective) that may or may not be available for conscious awareness (Roeckelein, 2006). Freud (1900, 1933) asserted that this unconscious association deals with realities of the world in terms of instinctual demands for pleasure and desire-fulfillment regardless of the force of reality. Freud (1920a, 1949) propounded that the sense-organs of human beings report realities of the external world to their mind incompletely, because these realities are molded according to what are desirable and undesirable in their consciousness. Therefore, reality of the external world is unknown; the unconscious is the only true psychic reality. Consciousness is as an intention to attain a goal that governs the flow of thought processes when intended goal is in focal conscious awareness. Nevertheless, one cannot consciously decide to change this goal and seek to establish a reverie or meditative state. This switch in mind-set is a way of either clearing the mind for relaxation or getting in touch with extended meanings of a goal by allowing a broader network of association and organization by multiple, diverse schemas (Horowitz, 1988). While the sequence of ideas may feel random, it is actually determined by unconscious intentions and schemas for processing information, and for thinking processes (Crook, 1980).

The unconscious thinking processes, investigated in this study, are respectively and relatively depicted in Diagram 1.0. This diagram attempted to show how the unconscious mind theory deems that people may not think of what they perceive is unconsciously divided into their desirable and undesirable experiences, which navigate their thinking processes through desirable and undesirable thoughts. A word, as a stimulus, can easily evoke what is desirable and what is undesirable experience of human beings out of their conscious control and awareness. People relatively think of what is pleasurable or unpleasurable for them, but they do not know "why or how" they perceive it in this way.

Human beings unconsciously associate a word stimulus with their mental representation of their past or prospective experiences. They unconsciously prevent or repress their unpleasant or unacceptable experiences from entering their conscious awareness, wherein a conflict between acceptable and unacceptable experiences emerges. Hence, they are presupposed to use one of the unconscious defenses to avoid tension, ensued from this conflict, by which they can create excuses or reasons that are socially or individually acceptable for their decision, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. This case is presupposed to be suited to definition and description of unconscious defense of rationalization.

Diagram 1.0 illustrates the unconscious thinking processes, in unobserved manner, unconscious association might precede repression, and repression might precede rationalization. However, in observed manner, these unconscious processes might be ordered vice versa, indicating that rationalization might precede repression and repression might precede unconscious association. Theoretically, undesirable and desirable thoughts (experiences) are assumed to emerge in parallel rather than in order. However, in practice (in observed manner), undesirable thoughts can be observed prior to desirable one or vice versa depending on the level of satisfaction or the mood of a person. This is because the unconscious thinking processes operate at the same time in associating perceived stimulus with desirable and undesirable experiences. However, it only can keep either desirable or undesirable one in thinking activities; cannot do it at the same time.

#### 1.10. Conclusion

This study is important in order to know how students process their thinking activities. Through the selected research questions, it was hoped that the study will yield various issues underlying thinking process of students in regard to differences between what they know and how they know. Students might be able to give reasons of their behavior by drawing conclusions and justifying them. However, the students might not be able to show how they determine what they exhibit as their reasons, that is, they might not be able to point what process they have gone through to reach decisions based on the reasons they made. Students are able to consciously show what the result of their thinking process is by pointing at it, but they are unlikely to be able to show how they process their thinking to reach what they show as a result.

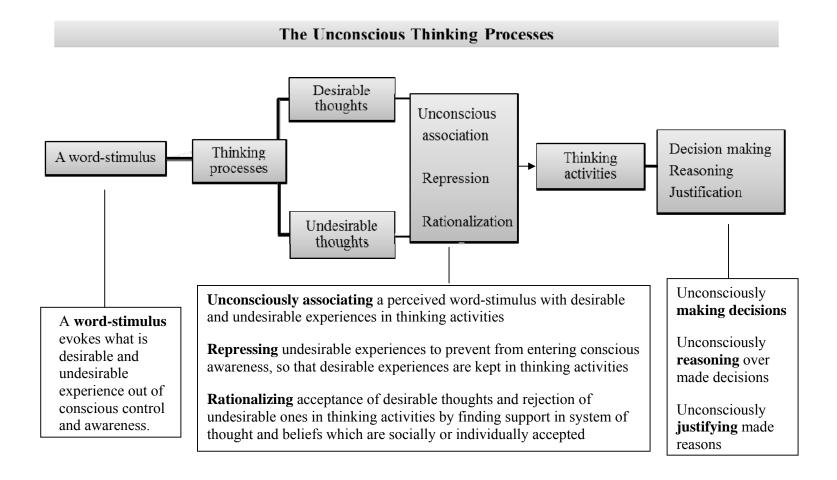


Figure 1.0 The Unconscious Thinking Processes

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