

The Concept of “Energy” in Modern Society and Its Impact on Human Quality of Life

Zelin Lu^{1,a,*}

¹*Hangzhou Foreign Language School, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, 310000, China*

a. Lucas_LZL2007@163.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Nowadays, the concept of energy has gradually entered the public's view and has become more and more popular, so more research needs to be conducted in this field while there isn't a clear definition for energy. This paper mainly discusses the development of the concept of energy, its definition and its impact on living quality. This paper aims to unify the concept of energy, making it easier for scholars researching this concept to clarify its definition and development process. It also helps the public to better understand this concept and the benefits it brings to people's quality of life. Methods of literature review and case analysis are used in this paper. This paper finds that the concept of energy has been relatively universal throughout history as a dynamic, transformative force that interacts within and between individuals to cause movement, change, and growth both physiologically and psychologically. Also, energy can have a great impact on the quality of human living.

Keywords: energy, living quality, emotion, motivation

1. Introduction

Energy is a dynamic, transformative force that interacts within and between individuals to cause movement, change, and growth both physiologically and psychologically as a single concept called energy. This paper mainly discusses the development of the concept of energy and the similarities between them, aiming to summarize these concepts into a universal one. Also, it gives a general idea of how energy can impact the quality of human life and the mechanisms under it. The method of literature review and analysis is applied in this paper. The universal and clear definition of energy as a single concept can help people improve the quality of human living.

2. Basic introduction of the concept of “energy”

2.1. The development of the concept of “energy” in academic research

The concept of energy can be traced back to the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Freud proposed that the id is the source of energy, which is primarily in the form of libido, sexual energy, and thanatos, death instincts [1]. As Freud said, the id operates on the pleasure principle, which means it constantly seeks to satisfy basic drives, including hunger, thirst, sexual desires, and other primal urges. These urges demand immediate satisfaction, so they will produce energy. The ego then arises from the id and develops to help the individual adapt those desires to the real world. In other words,

the energy of the ego is essentially the regulated flow of libido, or energy, that is allowed to express itself in socially acceptable ways, which often imposes restrictions on the satisfaction of the id's desires. This is because the ego works on the reality principle, meaning it delays gratification in order to make decisions that are appropriate and realistic, taking into account the constraints of the external world. If the ego fails to regulate the id effectively, there can be an overwhelming surge of desires, which might manifest as anxiety or other emotional disorders. The superego represents the moral conscience and social rules that individuals internalize as they grow. It develops under the impact of parents, society, and even the culture. If the ego acts according to the id's wishes, the superego will activate feelings of guilt or anxiety, which are psychological forms of energy discharge meant to correct or punish the ego's actions. All in all, Freud mainly proposed that the flow of psychic energy was in constant movement, being directed toward various desires and needs, and if the id, ego and superego are not in equilibrium, energy will be consumed and turned into the form of anxiety or other mental disorders. Based on the theory of Freud, Arnold H. Modell expands on Freud's ideas by suggesting that psychic energy is not limited to sexual drives. He proposes that energy in the psyche can be seen as more general and multi-dimensional, encompassing various aspects of mental life, such as emotions, thought processes, and the engagement of cognitive functions [2]. Psychic energy, in Modell's view, is crucial for psychological transformation. It helps in the process of mental growth and healing, enabling a person to integrate unconscious material, resolve inner conflicts, and experience personal development. Modell stresses that psychic energy is involved in processes such as sublimation, which turns primitive impulses into socially acceptable or even productive behaviors. Other researchers also describe the concept of "energy" using different terms. For instance, Thayer describes the concept "energy" using the term "energetic arousal". "Energetic arousal" is defined as a state of heightened physiological and psychological activation characterized by increased alertness, and readiness for action. It involves a sense of vitality and enthusiasm, often associated with feelings of motivation and engagement [3]. Moreover, this concept can also be described as the term "subjective energy", which is proposed by Ryan, who defines this as a positive feeling of aliveness and energy [4]. The rest of the researchers also use varied terms like positive affect [5].

2.2. The concept of the term "energy" in today's society

Another pair of researchers, Quinn and Dutton, also expands the concept of energy further. They investigate energy from the perspective of communication and coordination between people [6]. In their eyes, coordination in organizations is not simply about the transmission of information or task allocation. Instead, it involves a process of emotional and energetic engagement between individuals. Energy, in this context, refers to the psychological and emotional investment that participants bring to a conversation, in other words, the extent of their involvement and engagement, which in turn influences the effectiveness of coordination efforts. The authors emphasize the concept "energy-in-conversation" in their essay. Energy is transferred through conversational processes such as empathy, feedback, and shared emotional states between people. In this view, conversations are not just communicative acts but also processes through which individuals create emotional momentum, or the flow of energy, which will influence the effectiveness of the conversation in turn. Moreover, people will gain different kinds of energy from the conversion, including positive and negative. Positive Energy is the energy that arises when conversation participants engage in a supportive, collaborative, and optimistic way. On the contrary, negative energy arises when conversations are marked by conflict, uncertainty, or emotional strain. Hallowell focuses on cognitive energy—the mental capacity we have for thinking, focusing, and engaging in tasks [7]. It can be depleted when individuals are constantly under stress or are required to handle multiple tasks at once. He likens the brain's capacity for attention and thought to a battery. When an individual is constantly working under pressure or dealing with too many distractions, their mental battery becomes drained. This will result

in lower performance and the inability to focus effectively on the tasks at hand. However, energy can flow back to you if you take some strategies to “recharge” your battery. For example, taking breaks, reducing multitasking, and sleeping will all help you to recover from the mental burnout state. However, for some researchers like Barsade, “emotional energy” just refers to the intensity of emotions we express while communicating with each other [8]. This concept or this term, although with the same name, is definitely different from the concept discussed by Collins, so concepts like this will not be discussed in this paper.

2.3. The summary of the concept of energy

When people look closer into these concepts, they can easily find that they have a lot in common. Therefore, for convenience, the following paper will define this concept simply and uniformly as energy. These terms can be summarized to indicate two main aspects that energy can have an effect on: both psychologically and physiologically. For the physiological aspect, people with high energy will have a better physical condition, which will be indicated as improved alertness and so on. In short, it's a state where the whole body can help people react to the environment more rapidly and effectively, so you can perform the task you are doing better. The effect in the psychological aspect is more obvious. Firstly, people will have stronger initiative and motivation to start handling your tasks, often with a high level of enthusiasm and happiness. Secondly, people will be more engaged, energetic and confident. Also, people will be less likely to suffer from mental disorders. Interestingly, all the essays describe energy as a flow of movement, or dynamic, no matter if it flows from one person to another person or it just flows between the different versions or states of one person, like id, ego and superego. What's more, both negative and positive energy will have this property. All in all, although different researchers have defined it with different terms, all of these concepts indicate that energy is a state where people will have a positive condition both psychologically and physiologically. As a result, this paper summarizes the dynamic, transformative force that interacts within and between individuals to cause movement, change, and growth both physiologically and psychologically as a single concept called energy.

3. The impact of "energy" on the quality of human life

3.1. The energy that affects people's quality of life

Referring to the research on energy that the author mentioned above, people can find the great impact that energy can have on people's daily lives. From Freud's perspective, mental disorders are the result of the mismatch between the id, ego and superego. He proposed that the flow of psychic energy can be repressed, redirected, or blocked, leading to psychological conflict and symptoms. For example, when desires are repressed, the energy doesn't disappear but instead creates psychological tension like anxiety. Also, Quinn and Dutton claim that the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication will be strongly correlated to the energy of the people involved. Without the emotional and cognitive energy of conversation, coordination efforts can become fragmented or disjointed. Hallowell also draws on neuroscience to explain how chronic stress activates the fight-or-flight response, which uses up the body's resources and depletes energy reserves, making it difficult for individuals to maintain focus, creativity, and cognitive performance over time. When these small things build up, the whole quality of your life will be greatly changed.

3.2. The mechanisms behind to improve the quality of human life

Although Fredrickson doesn't mention the concept of energy explicitly, her mention of positive emotion can be also seen as a form of energy, because of her emphasis on the dynamic nature of

positive emotions and their impact on the changes in the human mind, behavior and then overall living quality. She mainly talks about the broaden-and-build theory in her paper [9]. It mainly talks about how positive emotions can expand the range of thoughts and actions that the person will take in a given scenario. In other words, when people experience positive emotions, they will become more open-minded, creative, and able to see multiple perspectives. Over time, the accumulation of these broadened experiences helps to build personal resources, like social connections, physical health, intellectual resources, and psychological resilience. In this way, frequent positive emotions can help a person develop a more flexible thought-action repertoire in the long run. As time goes on, the effect of positive emotions will become bigger and bigger, potentially reaching a scale that can even change a person's life completely.

4. Conclusion

This paper mainly discusses the development of the concept of energy throughout history and analyzes why energy can affect the living quality. The concept of energy has been relatively universal throughout history as a dynamic, transformative force that interacts within and between individuals to cause movement, change, and growth both physiologically and psychologically. Also, energy can have a great impact on the quality of human living. The specific and scientific experiments about energy are not included in this paper, and only a few related concepts about energy like emotional and psychic energy are discussed to get the universal concept of energy. By considering more articles and studies that mention concepts related to energy, researchers can provide a more scientifically rigorous and comprehensive definition of energy. Researchers can also explore, through experiments, the impact of energy on human quality of life and mental health and the mechanisms behind it in a more comprehensive manner.

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