

The Application of C.G. Jung's Individuation Theory in Counselling Toward an Integrative Personality: A Case Study of Javanese Indonesian People

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According to Jung, a person should reach an integrated personality to be able to optimise self-actualisation and express themselves genuinely. This shapes their authenticity and integrity, which may inspire others. However, the development of an integrated personality can be obstructed by unconscious forces formed through traumatic events and psychological needs since childhood. To shape an integrated personality, C.G. Jung offered the concept of individuation to liberate the individual from *personas* influenced by egocentric unconscious forces through self-analysis and reflection. However, Jung only offered the concept without further explanation for a definite application method, which makes the individuation process hard to do personally because it is highly related to the infinite unconscious side of humans, which is not correlated directly to perceptual senses. The subject was chosen as a case study because her hesitance was suspected as a stereotypical Javanese obstruction toward her personality integration. The subject's case indicated that Javanese Indonesian people needed treatment to integrate their personalities in optimising their self-actualisation. Individuation counselling is one way to treat them. The purpose of this research is to prove that the ethos of individuation can be applied as a method of group counselling to develop the uniqueness and integrity of the Javanese people.

Keywords: *Individuation counselling, Integrative personality, Javanese Indonesian, Shadow, persona, Group counselling*

Introduction

The *persona* is a part of the self (behaviour, attributes, appearance) that is shown to be accepted by society and to cover the *shadow*. The *shadow* is part of the self (behaviour, attributes, reality) that the person denied or hid, be it consciously or unconsciously, for it is subjectively considered ugly, harmful or embarrassing (Jung, 1999, pp. 191-192). Therefore, the constant use of *persona* will hinder personality integration and drive compensatory behaviour. Instead of repressing parts of the self that one subjectively considers “ugly” or “bad,” those parts can be integrated to construct an authentic and integral personality (Jung, 2003, pp. 19-22; Ladkin, Spiller, & Craze, 2016). A person’s unconscious forces are hard to comprehend personally and are able to affect a person's perception, judgment, and behaviour (Bargh & Morsella, 2008).

Indonesia is a developing country in South-East Asia that has the fourth largest population in the world (258.7 million in 2016) (Badan Pusat Statistik 2017). From the Javanese Indonesian cultural perspective, a good person is polite, agreeable, and averse to conflicts (Magnis-Suseno, 1981, pp. 168-176). Indonesia has more than 1300 ethnic groups, with Javanese as the largest group (40%) (Na'im and Syaputra 2011). Javanese Indonesian families have strong bonds, it is common for extended family members, such as grandparents, to live together or nearby and become the caretakers of their grandchildren when parents are working (Setiadi 2006).

Hence, Javanese Indonesian parents, especially poor and less educated ones, use intimidation and shaming to control their children. They do not allow their children to state their opinion unless asked and demand their children's obedience (Sumargi, Filus, & Morawska, 2018). All these things are done to shape their children to be kind and accepted in society. However, this causes Javanese Indonesian children to repress their feelings, become compliant, and be afraid of confrontations. According to Jung (1999, pp. 34-36), such people will lean on compensatory and egocentric behaviour as a mechanism to release their psychological pressure. This is aligned with the subject who underwent typical Javanese Indonesian family education, became the ideal Javanese Indonesian stereotype, yet sacrificed her feelings, hopes, and needs. Understanding parenting risks and protective factors is essential for the development of effective and culturally appropriate parenting interventions (Kumpfer et al. 2008; Sanders 2008). Research conducted in the Western world has shown that parenting and family adjustment contributes to childhood behavioural and emotional problems (McKee et al. 2008; Prevatt 2003). Yet, methodologically rigorous research on parenting risks and protective factors in Eastern cultures, particularly in Indonesia, is limited. One of the key issues is a lack of validated measures to capture effective and ineffective parenting strategies employed by Indonesian parents (Sumargi et al. 2015b).

In this study, Jung's individuation theory was applied through analysing and discussing a counselee's life history narration in a group counselling setting. Phenomenology was used as the basis to understand the subject's point of view and maintain objectivity by collecting hints and forming comprehension about the subject through accepting the subject as a whole and not through assumptions and theoretical judgment (Husserl, 1958, pp. 20-30; Laverty, 2003). The way the subject narrates her life history includes a myriad of expressions, intonations, articulations, and response times. Physical gestures were noted, collected and interpreted based on the linguistic and historical aspects of the subject herself (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010).

In summary, the counselling based on the individuation process was done to assist the subject in finding her *shadows* and *personas*, integrating the *shadows* as the part of the *self*, and practicing self-regulation to shed the *personas*. Instead of a specific problem-solving method, this counselling method is a process to help a counselee form new behaviour patterns to achieve self-actualisation. The purpose of this research is to prove that the ethos of individuation can be applied as a method of group counselling to develop the uniqueness and integrity of the Javanese people.

Method

This individuation counselling method was applied in a group counselling setting and divided into 3 phases. The first phase was to establish a connection and group dynamics. Then, the researchers explained Piontelli's prenatal psychological stage (1996, pp. 47-64, 322-326) and psychological developmental phases of Erikson (1998, pp. 97-138; 1999, pp. 66-260) as the guidelines to compose life history.

The second phase was to discover the subject's unconscious forces by noting repeated patterns of reactions, words, expressions, gestures, behaviour, mannerisms, intonation, and response time throughout the life history narration (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). Then, interviews and group discussions were held to focus on repeated themes. As suggested by Kast (1999, pp. 79-87), the subject was then given time to reflect upon all the information gathered and determined about the subject's *shadows* and *personas*.

The third phase was to discuss self-reflection regarding the subject's *shadows* and *personas* to form a set of resolutions. This was done to construct a personal credo based on her life history and personal aspirations for positive reinforcement to practice self-regulation (Kast, 2001, pp. 64-70). Afterward, the subject was asked to choose 3 group members to act as reminders for reminding and giving feedback to the subject in self-regulation practice (Bustamante, Uengoer, & Lachnit, 2016).

Then, the subject was interviewed to evaluate the progress toward an integrated personality after 12 months. For cross-reference, a few group members were also interviewed separately to establish objective perspectives.

In the individuation counselling process, data was gathered from the subject's autobiography document, transcribed interview, and group impressions about the subject (Schilling, 2006). The subject's expressions, gestures, intonations, interactions within the group and narration processes were also video recorded and noted (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). All data was then categorised with thematic analysis methods to gain an understanding of the subject's phenomenon as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

The subject was a 20 year old Javanese Indonesian female enrolled in group counselling based on Jung's individuation for prospective counsellors. The subject stated that she did not dare to compete with others and withdrew from enrolment. Afterward, the subject stated that she regretted her decision and asked to re-enrol. The subject was chosen as a case study because her hesitance was suspected as a stereotypical Javanese obstruction toward personality integration.

The first phase consisted of 3 meetings. The subject did not attend the first meeting and later admitted it was because of her hesitance. The subject attended the second meeting because she was encouraged by her friends. The subject was quiet and did not initiate conversations. When roped into one, she was reserved and polite. By the third meeting, the subject seemed more comfortable with the group members but was still quiet and watchful. The group was given Piontelli-Erikson's developmental psychology theory as a guideline to write their autobiographies.

In the second phase, a week later, the subject submitted her autobiography and narrated her life history in detail, assisted with a PowerPoint presentation. The subject's family was poor and ostracized by their close, wealthy relatives. The subject stated that her family could not afford to get what she wanted or needed and that she was physically and verbally abused by her parents, who were frustrated by their poverty. According to the subject, her parents instilled in her good principles, forgiveness, conflict aversion, and respect for others. The subject admitted that she had low self-esteem because of poverty and that she had nothing to be proud of. Throughout the narration, the subject repetitively broached themes of poverty 15 times, her childhood abuse 14 times, respecting others 8 times, avoiding conflicts 11 times and neglecting personal needs 11 times. To broaden the understanding of these themes, subject interviews and group discussions were held.

The subject stated that poverty deeply affected her self-esteem, which resulted in feelings of unworthiness, an inability to initiate communication or speak up in discussion and avoidance of campus activities. The subject used to avoid confrontations because her parents instilled the idea that creating conflict is not nice. The subject also said that she was unable to refuse friends who asked her help and unable to express her opinions because she was afraid to hurt others. The subject also thought that she needed to repress her feelings to respect others.

A few group members who shared classes with the subject confirmed the subject's statements and added their impressions of the subject. They stated that the subject was often bullied in class and given the hardest task in group projects but went along and kept quiet. When they tried to defend the subject, the subject only smiled and dismissed the situation. They also stated that the subject tried to keep up her appearance by saving her money to buy branded things. Through listening to the subject's life history and 2 years of observation, they concluded that the subject tried to avoid conflict by being obedient and concealing her poverty by keeping up appearance.

After a given period of time, the subject internally concluded that poverty, presenting herself honestly, and fulfilling her emotional needs were the *shadows* she denied and hid. The *personas* she used to cover the *shadows* bought branded things, were obedient, and repressed hurt and anger by smiling and avoiding conflicts. The subject was asked to reflect further on how the *shadow-persona* mechanism affected her life.

Two weeks later, in the third phase, the subject presented her reflection upon the influence of *shadows* and *personas* in her life. The subject stated that though her social interactions seeming to be without conflict, they were shallow. The subject felt that she could never be herself because, in order to be accepted and not hurting anyone while she kept being bullied, she had to sacrifice her personal comfort/emotional wellbeing. The subject also restricted relations by focusing on economic status, valuing material things, and studying hard to pursue wealth and status. This was because she did not want to be pitied for her poverty. The subject realised that these motivations are egocentric and stated that she wanted to change.

Afterwards, the subject was asked to construct a personal credo as a personal expression of positive reinforcement. The subject's personal credo is as follows: "*I accept my family's poverty, and all that happened because of it. I will learn to present myself honestly and care for my emotional wellbeing. I will fight my egocentric tendencies to reach an integrated personality*". The subject was asked to memorise this personal credo to recite positive reinforcement while practicing self-regulation. The credo was also the foundation of structuring a self-regulation practice. It involved practicing honesty, forming fair relations, and study as self-dedication. The subject was asked to choose 3 reminders from the group to maintain an objective perspective while practicing self-regulation.

The progress evaluation was held 12 months after the last phase. Through a separate interview with 3 reminders, it was gathered that the subject was more confident and assertive, had a broader social circle, and took part in campus activities and competitions. However, they stated that the subject still had difficulties reining in her shopping tendencies and refrained from initiating communication. These factors were then confirmed in the subject interview. The subject stated that she gained confidence and joy, had equitable relations and broader social circles though at times still burdened by low self-esteem and family poverty. The subject admitted that she felt more comfortable and honest with herself, could state her opinions in forum or class, and deliberately took part in campus social activities and competitions. The subject stated that the personal credo helped maintained her motivation to practice self-regulation and she achieved more personality integration.

Discussion

After individuation counselling, the subject's perspectives, which were distorted by Javanese Indonesian society's doctrines and became her *personas*, started to change. Research suggests that new awareness creates a more objective perspective. It is then combined with self-regulation; both are crucial for integrating personality (Erden, 2015; Zimmerman, 2002).

Individuation counselling offered new awareness for the subject, which was formulated in her personal credo through analysing her life history (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). The purpose of the personal credo was reconciliation with the subject's past, acceptance of *shadows*, to shed *personas* and to motivate her while practicing self-regulation (Jung, 2003, pp. 19-22; Ladkin, Spiller, & Craze, 2016). Memorising personal credo was needed to reaffirm the subject's aspiration toward self-integration. The personal credo and self-regulation practice needed to be applied in action through discipline and art.

The subject's change could not be expected instantly because former perspectives had been instilled as her unconscious forces (Donlevy, 1996). This resulted in repetitions of old patterns in the subject's behaviour and thoughts. Therefore, reminders were significant in helping the subject to maintain objectivity and keep going with practice (Bustamante, Uengoer, & Lachnit, 2016). Both the subject's will and reminders' objectivity helped her in self-integration.

The subject's case indicated that Javanese Indonesian people needed treatment to integrate their personality and optimise their self-actualisation. Individuation counselling is one way to treat them. In the subject's context, this method was able to assist her development because she was able to open up about herself. She took critiques and suggestions while being honest throughout the whole process. However, this method has the capacity to help a subject to reach an integrated personality. It will be hard to predict the results when it is being used to treat people who are highly defensive and closed off or have a black and white perspective

regarding morality versus psychological matters. While morality concerns good and bad, right and wrong, and prejudices, psychology concerns analysing the what, why and how of thoughts, behaviours and events. People who cannot differentiate morality and psychology, if they worry about being judged and criticised, might have difficulties opening up. While the subject was open minded, a counsellor anticipated the subject's fear of being judged by implementing group support and prohibiting moral judgment from group members.

Through one year of observations, it is known that the subject did experience many transformations. For example, the subject of the research/counselee is getting bolder by becoming involved in campus activities. She is more confident in conducting herself in society. However, there are two aspects that are considered undeveloped: the tendency to buy branded goods and the tendency to follow the crowd. This fact does not mean that individuation counselling is not effective in the development of the individual personality of the Javanese. Personality transformation does take time, because it does not occur immediately just after treatment. Instead, what is formed by individuation counselling is the discovery that the subject of research/counselee has a mask or persona. They wish to always appear with branded goods so that they appear "rich" and tend to be inferior in order to preserve their honour. This discovery became the foundation for initiating transformation. It can occur if the counselee is willing to be disciplined in training themselves towards behavioural transformation.

In the individuation of C. G. Jung, transformation will occur if the subject through self-analysis is able to find their own shadow and persona and subsequently discard the pseudo persona in order to find their true self. In reality, the counselee above has difficulties changing her negative behaviour (e.g. by appearing with branded goods) because unconscious thoughts are deeply rooted in the counselee. To guarantee the transformation, the counselee needs assistance from other individuals. In this context, the role of the controller chosen by the counselee becomes important. The function of the controller is first to reinforce the counselee when the counselee conducts behaviour transformation exercises. The controller must disenchant the counselee. The counselee's personality is unique, valuable and convertible. The next responsibility of the controller is to reprimand and to remind the counselee when she repeats her negative behaviour (she tends to wear branded goods and sometimes still feels inferior). Thus, the controller must remind the counselee to oppose the negative tendencies. Therefore, the group counselling that uses the mindset of individuation facilitates the process of discovering the shadow and the persona. The discovery process is carried out together with the assistance of all group members. The formation of a controller as a companion to a counselee is an effective way to counter the power of the unconscious so the counselee is willing to train themselves for the formation of new behaviour.



Based on the counselee's case above, it can be emphasised that this individuation counselling focuses on carefulness in listening to a counselee's narrative to find subconscious content, patterns in the counselee's behaviour, and developing full appreciation of the counselee's self. These things are necessary to create a listening attitude and an attitude of appreciation. First, it is necessary to limit the number of participants in one group to only 6-9 participants. This serves to assure the characteristic of thoughtfulness among members and the attention of the counsellor to the whole group. Consequently, the atmosphere of listening to each other can be created, especially when the counselee is narrating her personal life. Second, the inculcation of phenomenological thinking in the whole group enables each individual to respect one another and prevents members of the group from having the tendency to judge other members. Group members were also trained to accept their reality through a phenomenological perspective and to overcome silent judgement and analysis.

Conclusion

Individuation counselling can be effectively applied as a method to find awareness of the shadows and personas of Javanese individuals, who like to “wear masks” as a strategy to be accepted by society. This has been proved by the subject of this research, and it is evident that individuation counselling was indeed effective in discovering her shadows and persona. Based on the discoveries, various exercises can be applied to discover the uniqueness of the individual self and the transformation of the mindset that is allowed to develop the integrity of the counselee. Such transformations develop self-confidence, involve individuals in campus activities, and make them eager to study to approach a better future. Therefore, the ethos of individuation can be applied as a method of group counselling to develop the uniqueness and integrity of the Javanese people.

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