

***Humanistic Approach on Art Therapy in Attempts to Create Balance Self-Concept:
A Case Study***

Devina D. Winarto, Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia
Monty P. Satiadarma, Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research, explores the connection between Self-Concept and developmental process of a person in attempt to understand better about how obscurity in Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) and Self-Concept Differentiation (SCD) can create incongruence that will affect one's function as a human. Holistic experience in each life event play major roles to clarify about own Self-Concept, be it positive or negative as mentioned in Erikson Stage of Development. This is important to create a stable Self-Concept so that it can be used as tool for coping mechanism in facing diverse social roles and demands in each life stage. Therefore, a better understanding about one's "self" will help a person create balance between expectation and reality. This can be achieved by increasing SCC and decreasing SCD to create more similarity rather than less, not to create incongruence. Initial assessment using Tennessee Self-Concept Scales II (TSCS-II) will give better explanation and understanding of the "self", while Humanistic Art-Therapy were used to create positive dialectical approach that will encourage a person to explore and evaluate themselves in search of incongruence in their Self-Concept. This research show a significant result that incomplete development stages create incongruence between SCC and SCD, resulting in Self-Concept differentiation that correlated positively with poor emotional adjustment, lower personal well-being, anxiety, depressive symptoms, neuroticism, and lower self-esteem. This research also showed that humanistic Art Therapy help a person to identify incongruence and bring enlightenment of own Self-Concept.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Self-Concept Clarity, Self-Concept Differentiation, Erikson Stage of Development, Humanistic Art-Therapy.

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Introduction

As a child, human born as a white sheets, plain and pure from misdeeds and corruption, but when they were born, each of them brings their genetic blueprints of their parent's that more or less inherited to them. This blueprint might or might not be followed as it is by the child, but rather, the child will choose what kind of person they want to be in the future, and the blue print will be their core milestone that set up the basic foundation for their development as the "Self". Campbell et.al. (1996), defined how an adult see themselves generally and how did they feel about themselves as self-concept. Rogers (in "Carl Rogers: Simply Psychology," 2004) divided self-concept into three aspects, they are ideal-self, real self, and self-esteem (self-worth).

When they was born, a person might not have much demand and responsibility, but as they get older, they will have more demand and responsibility towards their life, this demand will be varied whether they are acting as a friend, parent, child, worker, sibling, etc. (Diehl& Hay, 2011). Self-concept are used as a coping tools, and are expected to respond to situational demands, and the ability to do so is a sign of good psychological adjustment and mental health (Block; Rogers; in Diehl& Hay, 2011). Stable self-concept are needed to cope with diverse social role demands in life, or demands from each life stages (Campbell et al, 2003; Gergen, 1991; Harter and Monsour, 1998).

A person able to life their life positively and happily if they have coherent self-concept that gives them sense of identity, continuity, and meaningfulness in life over time (Brandstädter & Greve. 1994; Diehl& Hay, 2011; Rogers, 1959). Congruency between self-concept and their real self, too, playing an important role for one's mental health (Rogers, in Ismail, 2015). Therefore, we need to have more similarity between what they want to be and what they are capable of to be able to lead a fullest life. The more a person understand about themselves clearly on what they want, who they are, and what they wanted to be, they will have what know as Self-oncept Clarity, and in contrary when a person have unintegrated aspects of Self-concept they will create Self-Concept Differentiation (Diehl& Hay, 2011).

Rogers and Erikson (in Feist& Feist, 2008), said that each experiences a human has been experiencing, will contributes to shapes and enhance the self to become as it is now. To develop a positive and stable self-concept, a person need to face challenge and experiencing any negative/ positive experience to understand that they will face change as they grow, it might be challenging, painful, and sometimes frightening. But, all of this changes and adaptation to develop into a fully functioned person, and will enhance the way they see themselves, therefore creating a clear and strong Self-concept. An Incomplete experiences in life will created incongruence between ideal-self and self-esteem, resulting in self-concept differentiation rather than self-concept clarity (Diehl et.al. 2001; Diehl, Young Blade, Hay& Chuy, 2011; Diehl& Hay, 2011). Self-concept differentiation is associated with poor emotional adjustment and lower personal well-being anxiety, depressive symptoms, and neuroticism, and low self-esteem (Donahue; Bigler, Neymer& Brown; Diehl et al; in Diehl& Hay, 2011).

In attempt to bring balance between expectation and reality, by increasing self-concept clarity and decreasing self-concept differentiation, researcher will try to

design an intervention using Art therapy. It is believed to be an effective intervention to improve self-esteem by giving the opportunity to learn skills and change the cognitive process, and it believed to be able to reduce emotional disturbance by reframing negative emotions and thoughts (Argyle and Bolton; Franklin; in alavinezhad; Liebman, Mousavi, & Sohrabi, 2014). Art therapy itself rooting from psychoanalytic base but also applicable through humanistic approach, making this therapy safer and easier to be applied and understand, therefore reducing the risk of feeling rejected/ traumatized by psychotherapy (alavinezhad et al., 2014; Buchalter, 2004; Williams, 2018). Colours, shape, and textures are used to express, understand, and integrate emotional reaction (Hass-Cohen& Carr, in Williams, 2018). Using the dialectical approach from behavioural therapy techniques, encourage the client to reflect by themselves and in the end encourage emotional regulation, distress tolerance, and positive self-regard (Clark, in Williams, 2018). Using this approach, researcher hopes this will help the client to build more balance self-concept, because a fully functioned human will have more similarity than less (Carl Rogers, Simple Psychology, 2014).

Participant

The participant of this research is 30 years old female, named SV. SV was born from an introvert parents, both does not like to socialize and always in their comfort zone. SV said that her father led a simple life, with ordinary job, and low risk decision making, that makes her experiencing a flat moments in life. Her father was an honest and straight men, never risking his family to something that has unexpected result. Therefore they never had any downside might as well upside moments in life. Her mother too, are a simple woman, and rather conventional. SV is a very shy person that did not like to involve in any social activity, and it goes the same with her father. SV never had joined any competition, never had any additional lesson in anything (eg: music, martial arts, arts.), and was always discouraged by her parents to do something that are risky. SV also never join any organizational activity, and never had any position that requires her leadership skill.

As she grew, SV became more discourage by her friend's achievement. Most of her friends already has a settle job with a great income, meanwhile SV was still stuck in a standard company with low income. SV felt her intellectual capacity is decreasing, both of her friends are achieving a lot of new things each year, but in contrary, SV became more, less passionate about her life. SV also felt burdened by her capacity to keep up with her friend's conversation. SV did not read much, and less knowledgeable, therefore she was lacking in understanding the context of their conversation.

People tend to say that SV has a negative aura, or looking gloom, and it's sadden her. SV knew that she did not have the best. Every time she gathers with their friend, SV felt like an additional and unable to lead the conversation or become the centre of attention. SV lacks of achievement seeking needs are caused by her peaceful environment during childhood, she recalled not being challenged into anything. Therefore she did not have enough confidence to break through and be passionate about her life.

Methodology

Researcher is using Tennessee Self-Concept Scale II (TSCS-II), to obtain participant self-concept score, and art therapy based on Buchalter (2004) that were specially made, adjusted to participant's need to encourage participant making self-evaluation and lighten up participant Self-Concept Clarity (SCC). The TSCS-II were given as a paper and pencil questionnaire. The art therapy consisted of six session, and were given once per three days as a homework and was evaluated together after participant finished the task. Participant used drawing paper, drawing pen, pencil, and spidol as the art media. The art therapy session as follow:

Session	Task
1	Changing images (Negative)
2	Bowl of happiness
3	Circle of Honor
4	Warrior picture of self
5	Mandala (inner and outer)
6	Changing images (positive)

Table 1. Art therapy design from Buchalter (2004)

Results

From Self-Concept assessment using Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the results are Physical aspect 67 (High), Moral and Ethics: 72 (Very high), Personal: 50 (Normal, bottom limit), Family: 62 (high), Social: 54 (normal). From the result, SV showing a very high score in moral and ethics aspect (70), meanwhile showing rather low in personal aspects (50). Therapist believed that this is the source of incongruence between self-image and ideal-self, leading to unbalance self-concept. On the physical aspect (67) SV scored rather high, which therapist found, SV has a contradictory wish. She wanted to looks good and be admired, but she was not really pleased by her physical appearance. Other contradiction is, she admit to have a good health, but said that she did not feel healthy. We can see that SV wanted to be physically good, but she felt she is not attractive enough, this too can lead to incongruence.

Results from the art therapy sessions are

Session 1: Changing images (Negative)- A5 paper



Pic 1. Changing images (negative)

SV said her biggest stressor came from her working place which she said was very much unprofessional. **The Red girl** never did any but gain much upon someone else works, she is a symbol of unfairness, favouritism, and unprofessionalism in office. **The yellow girl** is a new employee, but she has an opportunity to develop her career, she is the symbol of learning and opportunity. **The blue boy** has a lot of works to do, but he seemed to enjoy it, he is the symbol of passion and happiness. Meanwhile as we can see, **the monochrome girl** is herself, she has a lot to do, she works her best, but people never notice her. That is why she can't develop colours in her drawing and stayed in a shadow as a monochrome.

SV admitted that she has the tendency of being unnoticed, and it feels like she was not important. She said after working a long time at that office, she did not have any opportunity to develop her skill meanwhile everybody else in her office whom working poorly rise their career using their dirty trick. SV also has a negative feeling that she might be somewhat unlucky, because every time she applies for new job, it always turned out failed, meanwhile her other friends easily get new job and resigned from the office. Somehow from her drawing she realized that basically she was jealous of someone else's achievement but are not confident enough to achieve something by her own.

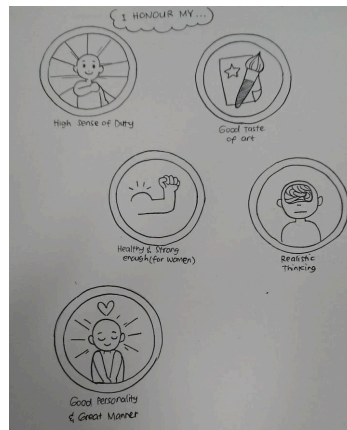
Session 2: Bowl of Happiness-A5 paper



Pic.2. Bowl of Happiness

SV explained that her happiness was not full, but it will last and she loves the colours. When asked why the colour was gloomy and not bright, she said that she just like the colours and did not think much of the bright colours. SV said her bowl was never really full, but maybe a little bit fuller than what it is now during her high school and college. She said that is because she met a lot of nice people and did not have much responsibility besides studying. For SV real happiness then is when she is able to get what she wants, but now, she said real happiness is when we can accept who we are and love ourselves unconditionally for our strength and weakness. Attitude can affect happiness if you are proud and enjoying your positive attitude that you have. Positive attitude are always welcome by other peoples. SV said by doing her hobby and take some time from daily routine and to rest is her habits/ rituals that can add her happiness. SV said she is still in progress to create her own happiness, starting from small things from doing her hobbies and meet up with her closest friends. Currently, SV is more focusing in embracing her weakness and strength and do a lot of self-reflects. Therapist realized that SV actually already figure out what is her problem, but need to be encouraged in her process of achieving stability between ideal and self-images. SV also need someone to push her to try get out from her shell and try new things to achieve higher.

Session 3: Circle of honor-A5 paper



Pic. 3. Circle of Honor

SV are proud of her

1. High sense of duty:

This build a high responsibility in her and always make sure she finish her job before dead line and always present the best result. She is very proud of this because it creates good work ethics in her.

2. Good taste of art

She is proud of her sense of colour and arts (Especially colours).Everybody that saw her arts always admires her colouring style and palette choice. She also had formal education, and it is her skill.

3. Healthy and strong

SV feel she is healthy and stronger than regular woman, she is courageous enough to try a lot of adventurous and dangerous things. She thought it was because of her high school life, that was full of confident and courageous woman. They shaped her to be independent and more confident.

4. Realistic thinking

Always be able to rationalize well using her logic, and able to avoid dangerous and impulsive things. SV realized although this are good, sometimes she can get too realistic and unable to dream high.

5. Good personality and Great manner

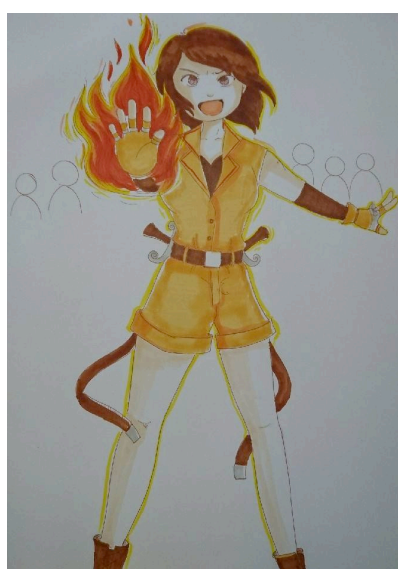
SV tried to always be polite and respects anybody from young to old, so she can communicate well to both. She also liked by her colleagues because of her nurturing and kind nature, and able to speak up if needed.

After the third assignment, Therapist realize that SV always draws in a small size paper (A4-A5), when asked the reason why, SV told therapist that she was not able to filled the paper every time she drew and that her drawing are usually small, so she thought it would be a waste of spaces. Therapist realize that SV source of energy is weak, that is the source of her lack of efforts. Therapist asked to see her other's drawing (from her sketch book), and saw that her picture are almost always small and without background, but full of colours. That is why in life, she was not really strive for the best and always done only enou gh (not trying more than she could). When Therapist asked her to draw in A3 paper for the next assignment, she looked reluctant and somehow showing the sign of unwillingness. After more persuasion, SV finally

agreed. From here, therapist felt that SV always afraid to get out from her comfort zone, and was not doing her best if she was faced with problems. SV admitted that her mood is easily disturbed if she face challenged.

Therapist also feel that SV actually wants approval from society and at the same times learning to accept herself for what she is. This leads to frustration and incongruence at the same time. Therapist also felt that SV need to grow stronger than what she is now if she really wants the approval of society, because SV show inconsistency in what she felt against what she wants. Therapist told SV to adapt to this change and continue what she is doing now, because she is starting to build up her confidence and it is a good things. Sometimes it might be frustrating, but in the end it will works well, and she will get used to it.

Session 4: Warrior picture of self-A3 pape



Pic. 4. Warrior Picture of Self

SV draw for the first time on A4 paper and she felt it was so hard. Several times she complained and showing difficulties in tracing the long lines and drawing the big images, but she kept motivating herself that she can do it. In the end the drawing is finish and she felt so proud to be finally able to do something she outside her comfort zone. Her picture told us about herself as a warrior. SV said that the warrior have a strong physical ability and well built, she is dependable and have a high responsibility. She is a good leader that never leaves her comrades behind, and always tries to solve a problem until it finished. Her weakness is that she is rather emotional from the outside, but actually have a soft heart inside. For her, action is more important rather than just emotional support or affection, and the hero are always able to provide it when it needed.

SV said this hero have an ability to control the fire, which is the strongest offensive elements from other elements. Although she has the strongest power, she did not abuse the power to dominate the world, in contrary she used it to help people in need and protect them from evil force. She also wanted to give warmth and lit the passion of people's heart using her fire, making the world a better place. SV reflected how she handle obstacles in life and she said she has tried her best to solve it by revising and

correcting what she did wrong to make it better. She will only ask for help if she are unable to solve it by herself anymore. She admit that her mood is one of the main problem that stopping herself in solving her problems. When things goes wrong, her mood will turn negative and she ended up doing nothing instead being irritated. She knew that this is a bad habit, but it is very hard to be corrected, but she is trying a little by little.

SV felt that instead of being a warrior, she is still took the passive role in her life, and she felt that in reality she was going far from the way she wanted as a warrior. She realized a warrior should be passionate, and have a great energy to help people, also have a high motivation on everything, but she is far from it. She hope after knowing her problems, and through this art therapy session, her self-esteem wil rise and hopefully become the real warrior she wanted to be.

Session 5: Mandala (inner and outer)-A3 paper



Pic. 5. Inner and Outer Mandala

For the fifth assignment, SV drew an inner and outer mandala who represent her current situation and future expectation. When she drew this, she said she need to put a lot of efforts because of the paper size and the detail she has to put into it. She felt exhausted after working on it, but at the same time proud. In the inner mandala she drew about her current routines that burn her out because of the workloads and the same type of jobs. She also mention that there is a lot of flatterer that climbing their way up through dirty tricks, and to make it worst, the bosses are unable to saw the real potential in their employee, that made her felt being disrespect and not appreciated.

She also stated that she has tried to apply for a new job in many job vacancy to no avail, and each rejection made her confidence decreasing. She cannot decide what kind of future she wanted to be. On the other side, the outer mandala are more colourful and full of futuristic dreams compared to the inner mandala that are in grayscale. In the future, SV said she wanted to have her own studio and not become a corporate slave anymore. She also wanted to work out and improve her physical ability, having a higher education, and find a husband to build a family. She also want to try to become less moody and developing her inner peace.

Session 6: Changing images (Positive)-A3 paper



Pic. 6. Changing Images (Positive)

In Session 6, therapist ask SV to change her first drawing that represented her negative feelings, into a positive feelings. Her previous drawing was using an A5 paper, so therapist ask her to move the same drawing using A3 paper. When she re-draw the picture, SV felt that it was not difficult to change the images into positive, because she actually aware and already know what she really wants in positive way. She really enjoys drawing it, because it was full of colours and are brighter than the first drawing.

To change the negative images, SV drew more stars and love into the pictures, representing meaningful and honourable job. She also added a lot of colours to show happiness, and make all the people behind her that she was jealous about become equally happy as her. During the making of new positive images, SV thought about what kind of ideal situation that fit her, that is why she put a lot of colours on herself. When she was going to change the people behind her, she realize that their ideal situation might be different than her and that they do have their own idealism, so in the end she drew them to be as equally happy as her, to respect and helping each other.

Conclusion

Incongruence between self-images and ideal-self are the main issues that are affecting participant self-concept. She turned out to have such images that she wanted to show to other people, but do not have much resource to appeal, this make a gap between what the participant want and what potential she have, resulting in jealousy and frustration, leading to low self-esteem. Participant at first feel that the drawing in A3 paper drained her energy and was a very hard task for her, but therapist push her to finish the task. Also, the participant push herself and determined to finish the task with maximum effort.

As the session goes on, therapist found that participant did not tried hard enough to improve her energy capacity or to give more efforts outside her comfort zone to achieve something. The participant admitted that in the real life, she often thinks too much, rising her insecurity, this, interrupting her determination to finish her task or overcome her challenge, and ended up doing nothing. Participant are easily

discouraged by small things that ruin her mood, and seems to not have passion about anything. Therapist told her to keep practicing to draw at A3 paper to help her increase her energy. Therapist still found it difficult for her to be passionate and increase her achievement needs, because participant always appear somehow lethargic and sighing a lot during the process of making an art.

After the therapy, the participant felt fulfilled that she is able to finish her task, especially the one using A3 paper. She felt proud of herself that she can do it even though it was hard. During the process, she understand that she will need to appreciate herself and dealing with her insecurities upon anything. The participant become more aware about herself and realize that surprisingly she can portray her future and her wish better than she thought. The participant realized that she has to do art improvement more often and working on it to get a better result. The most important thing is that she realize that she needs to do something soon enough if she want to make a change and achieve what she wanted to achieve in the future.

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Contact email: devina.winarto@gmail.com