



DISCOVERING EGOCENTRIC UNCONSCIOUS FORCES WHICH OBSTRUCT COUNSELOR CANDIDATE TO DEVELOP ALTRUISM

Paulus Teguh Kusbiantoro¹ⁱ,

Marthen Pali²,

Dany Moenindyah Handarini³,

Punaji Setyosari⁴

¹Guidance and Counseling Graduate Study,
State University of Malang,
Malang, Indonesia

²Faculty of Psychology,
Pelita Harapan University,
Surabaya, Indonesia

^{3,4}State University of Malang,
Malang, Indonesia

Abstract:

In order a counsellor candidate to grow as an ideal counsellor, one need to develop altruism. As the first step of developing altruism, one is required to know oneself, so that one's behaviour is not controlled by egocentric unconscious forces and, specifically for a counsellor candidate, to be able to make conscious decisions regarding of their prospective counselees well-being. In a counselling group consisting of nine counsellor candidates, one female counsellor candidate with a strong motivation to be an altruistic counsellor was chosen as a subject in this research to develop altruism by discovering subject's unconscious forces. The subject was then asked to narrate her life history and to form a constellation to map her relationship patterns which are then followed by a group discussion/open interview. As a result, even though the subject has the motivation to strive as an altruistic counsellor, when she does not have a deep comprehension of herself, it is found that subject's egocentric unconscious forces are able to dictate her behaviour and obstruct altruism development.

Keywords: unconscious forces, life history narration, constellation, counsellor candidate, altruism

1. Introduction

A counsellor candidate is a counsellor in training that ideally works to mould and strengthens a counselee's character as an independent and socially responsible

ⁱ Correspondence: email teguhpaulus@gmail.com

individual (Locke, Myers & Herr, 2001: 314-315). It can only be achieved if a counsellor candidate possesses an altruistic mindset that displayed as confidence demeanour, strive for the welfare of others and courageous in taking risks in his struggle (Driver, 2001; Piliavin, 2009; Batson, 2008; Feigin, Owens & Smith, 2014; Newman & Cain, 2014; Ricard, 2015:17). Altruistic mindset will not develop when a person does not have a deep comprehension of oneself, and as a result, his behaviour is driven by his unconscious forces (Drakulich, 2015; O'Connor, Rasmussen, Miles & Hawton, 2009; Corey & Corey, 2009:43).

Unconscious forces are formed from each repressed force, situation, psychological events that one is not aware of -for it is not directly correlated with sensory perception- which is influenced by parental education and culture (Krupp, 2013; Jung, 2001: 7, 192; Jung, 2003: 11; Adler, 1994: 56-57). Unconscious forces tend to be compensatory, for they are formed through unfulfilled past needs, such as searching for missing parental figure (Freud, 2000: 116), acknowledgement, popularity, attention and sense of security (Adler, 1999: 50; Jung, 2003: 49) as well as past traumatic events that drives present-day behavior (Agbo, 2016). Hence, unconscious forces are affecting a person's perception, judgement, altruism quality and behaviour that lead to perceivable consequences without self-comprehension for the process of how it occurs (Frielingsdorf, 2008: 81-89; Jung, 1999:11). C. G. Jung inferred that each individual needs to recognize and elevate those unconscious forces to the realm of consciousness in order to reduce compensatory behavior (Jung, 2003: 59-125). By widening consciousness, the synergy of memories, thoughts and feelings will free a person from his irregular unconscious forces (Kast, 2002b: 44; Jung, 1999: 34; Jung, 1995: 18-21).

Based on Jung's theory, counsellor candidates need a method to deepen their self-comprehension during education and training to develop altruism (Corey, 2005: 19). The core of self-comprehension method is a dialogue process between counsellor candidate and senior counsellor within an open, honest, objective environment. The dialogue begins by narrating one's life history, discussion and mapping relationship patterns in the form of a constellation. Through narration, various forms of cultural essence, relationship patterns and inspirations that influence a person can be found (O'Connor, Rasmussen, Miles & Hawton, 2009; Pavenkov, Pavenkov & Rubicova, 2015; Drake, 2017: 291). This knowledge will help a person to understand his behaviour and lead to self-acceptance (Cheung, Alzate, Nguyen 2012; Kast, 2002a: 8; Moreno, 1997: 83), which enable further reformation of one's life direction in the future (Frielingsdorf, 1993: 83, 112; Drake, 2017: 291).

Constellation is a phase to find various past relations, mainly formed inside the family structure and adopted as present-day relationship pattern (Frielingsdorf, 1993: 96-103; Moreno, 1995: 30, 54; Scheiffele, 2003). By mapping the relationship pattern, the relation form and mechanism along with the abstract unconscious forces which influence a person will be visible. These findings will explain one's psychological reality and become a reminder so that a person will not be provoked by certain situations (Frielingsdorf, 1999: 118; Schermer, 2015).

The aim of this research is to discover egocentric unconscious forces that are important to be recognized for a counsellor candidate to avoid egocentric behaviour. By identifying egocentric unconscious forces, counsellor candidate can further develop altruism.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Subject

Counsellor candidates are chosen randomly and those who are willing to follow through are gathered as a counselling group (Smead, 1990: 7). One particular counsellor candidate with a clear motivation to be a good counsellor is chosen as this research subject without her knowledge (single-blind method). All counsellor candidates are given the theory of developmental psychology by Piontelli-Erikson and a time period of one week to write their life history (Erikson, 1998: 97-138; Erikson, 1999: 66-260; Piontelli, 1996: 25-64). The next step is to isolate the group from psychological contaminants for two days at a research facility and give each counsellor candidate a chance to narrate their life history, from constellation and group interview/ open discussion. Group counselling is conditioned in an open, honest, accepting atmosphere to grow solidarity and to form a bond among the group members. A group counselling will help maintain objectivity because the interaction will happen within the group with minimal intervention from the observer (Battegay, 2000: 39; Frielingsdorf, 1993: 110; Yablonsky, 1998: 33; Schermer, 2015).

2.2 Method of Analyzing

Phenomenology is used as the basis to understand subject's point of view and maintain objectivity by collecting hints and forming comprehension about the subject through accepting subject as a whole and not through assumptions and theoretical judgment (Husserl, 1958: 20-30; Stein, 2002: 200; Stein, 2008: 129-134). How the subject narrates her life history, myriad of expressions, intonations, articulations, response time, the physical gesture will be noted, collected and interpreted based on linguistic and historical aspects from subject herself (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009: 148-149). The whole narration, constellation, group interview/ open discussion and all interactions within the group will be video-recorded for further analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Subject Narration Analysis

The subject is now in training as a counsellor candidate with a motivation to be a good counsellor because she is inspired by her high school teacher who acted as her mentor. She narrated that early in her life, she has two sets of parental figures because her parents, who were economically poor had to reside in their older sibling's house up until subject was five years old. The subject told that she kept being torn by two different parenting styles between her parents and her uncle and aunt. Her parents,

busy to make a living and indirectly abandon her while her uncle and aunt, especially her uncle spoiled her and were overly protective of her, even scolding her parents when they didn't treat subject the way her uncle and aunt wanted. That caused subject to favour her uncle and aunt over her parents and relished in the attention showering from her uncle. When her parents finally moved out of their house, subject abruptly experienced lack of attention and pampering, thus she sought for those in her daily life and savouring moments where she visited her uncle and aunt every holiday. Sudden loss of warmth from her uncle and aunt became an unconscious force that dictates subject to fulfil the missing need from her childhood and dictate her present-day behaviour.

The outcome of her upbringing developed into three main unconscious forces that affect the subject the most, which are: the needs to be pampered, desire for the spotlight, and leeching from figures with authority. These patterns are repeated in a loop and subject implements them to daily interactions. This analysis needs to be further tested through the constellation.

3.2 Subject Constellation Analysis

Constellation is the phase to trace various relationship patterns used within the family that becomes present-day relationship patterns. To form a constellation, the subject will be helped by group members to portray chosen family figures who strongly affect the subject. Then, the subject will assign them within a certain distance, gesture, expression which symbolizes the relations within the subject's family.

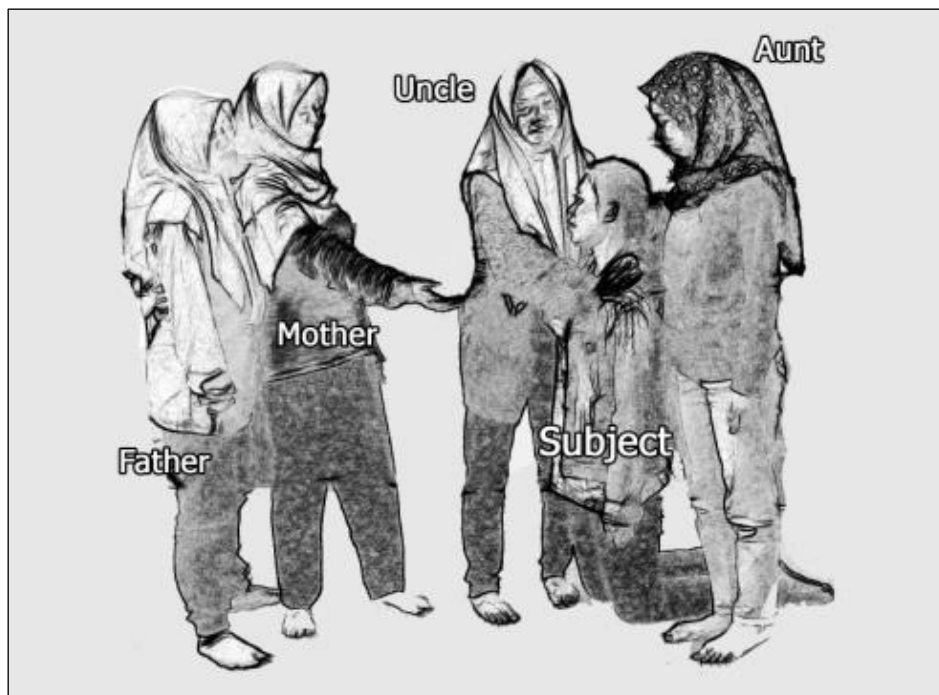


Figure 1: Subject's constellation (from a private documentary collection)

From the constellation image and the narration before, based on phenomenological observation we observed that subject was kneeling between her uncle and aunt while facing her parents. Subject looked comfortable inside her uncle's possessive embrace (with both hands) even though she kept staring at her parents. The subject positioned herself at the centre of the constellation, comfortable but unable to move freely because of the kneeling position and clung to childhood comfort in the form uncle's protective embrace, symbolizing attachment and dependency that inhibit subject's personality growth. Subject's verbal expression "... *I am my parents' daughter, not uncle and aunt's. Give me a chance to be with my parents. Don't force me to choose you..*" clashed with her narration and constellation, symbolizing subject's confusion.

From the content of the constellation, we can analyze that subject put herself in her uncle's embrace in the centre of the constellation that symbolizes her needs to be pampered, in the spotlight and attaching herself to a comforting figure who holds authority over her parents. The subject is in a secure position inside uncle and aunt's protection but kneeling and not standing as if she is paralyzed and dependent. Subject's parents appeared helpless and unable to rise against the subject's uncle who holds authority over them. Subject absorbed this situation from childhood and develops the tendency to be pampered (subject chose to stay inside uncle's embrace), seeking attention or being in the spotlight (as seen in the constellation where the subject is the centre of the composition) and attaching herself to authoritative figures (like her uncle).

By observing and analyzing the composition of the constellation, we can find alignments from the subject's life history narration and visualize the subject's relationship patterns.

3.3 Unconscious Forces Analysis

To further validate the subject's three main unconscious forces, group observations of the subject from their daily interactions are registered through open discussion/group interview. All group members confirmed that they also find subject tends to be spoiled, wanting to be in the spotlight, and attaching to authoritative figures. They observe that the subject will only befriend popular and authoritative people, somewhat arrogant to unpopular or quiet people, dominating the conversation and likes to talk about herself. The subject confirmed the group's statements.

When a counsellor candidate owns such unconscious forces, she cannot be an altruistic counsellor or in her own term: "good counsellor". There are possibilities that subject will be unable to accept her future counselees, tend to neglect them and will not fight for counselees' well-being when she tends to seek her own comfort.

Through narrating life history, and forming the constellation, with the help of group and observer, the subject can encounter her unconscious forces. By recognizing those forces, subject grasps a deeper understanding of herself and is enabled to resist against them. Throughout the whole treatment, the subject has deepened self-awareness, recognizing, having a hold over and begin to resist her unconscious forces.

4. Discussion

Negative past relations can cause trauma, certain emotional rise and behaviour patterns that repeatedly occur as an impact of unconscious forces drive that obstruct the development of altruism (O'Connor, Rasmussen, Miles & Hawton, 2009; More, 2013; Hänsel, 2014; Pavenkov, Pavenkov & Rubicova, 2015; Drake, 2017: 291). Through the subject's life history narration, we found that the subject was heavily influenced by her unconscious forces. This then drives the subject to seek pampering, attention/spotlight and attached to authoritative figures.

By recognizing those egocentric unconscious forces, the subject was able to gain some perspective and choices to go against those forces (Jung, 1995: 14; Jung, 2003: 60; Boeree, 2006; Seifert, 2014). That conscious resistance against egocentric tendencies enabled the subject to have a hold over her unconscious forces (Jung, 1995: 7-26; Allisson, 2013). By observing subject narrating life history and forming a constellation of relationship patterns; we summarized and analyzed the subject's possible unconscious forces. These then confirmed to the group for more objective perspective and proofs to open up the subject's conscience over her egocentric behaviours (Tahar & Felix-Kellermann, 1996; Zeintlinger-Hochreiter, 1996: 11, 75; Moreno, 1997: 77).

However, these can only be achieved in an open, honest and accepting group situation (Allisson, 2013, Schuman, 2014; Lemmon & Wayne, 2015; Kast, 2001: 80; Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004; Ishii, Sugimoto & Katayama, 2012; Elmagd et al, 2015) which reduce subject's anxiety over being judged. Acceptance will lead to an empathetic atmosphere that improves group dynamic (Moreno, 1997: 83; Battegay, 2000: 39; Yablonsky, 1998: 33; Cheung, Alzate & Nguyen, 2012). Group sincere acceptance, while the subject was narrating her life history and forming constellation with the help of group members, was a conducive situation that helps subject to open up (Feldhendler, 1992: 24; Yehoshua & Chung, 2013).

Unconscious forces are especially important to counsellor candidates to recognize so that those forces will not steer them toward subjective behavior (Erikson, 1999: 241-262; Frielingsdorf, 1993: 43, More, 2013). Throughout the whole process, the subject displayed honesty and courageous to disclose a part of her life which she never told before through narrating life history and forming the constellation. Thus, the subject was able to deepen self-comprehension, accepted her whole being including her unconscious forces, and resist against the urge to act out her egocentric unconscious forces. However, the capacity to change will be hindered if the subject maintains strong ego defence mechanism towards the reality of their unconscious forces.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this method can be applied towards all range of population so long as they remain open, honest and courageous to face the root of their problem. In this internal turmoil, life history narration and constellation forming cannot intervene, hence there's a need for further research to breakthrough ego defence mechanism to

help developing altruism by promoting deeper comprehension of self-unconscious forces.

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