

Exploring Identity Shifts in Individuals Undergoing Long-Term Psychodynamic Therapy

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
John S. Carlson ^{id} Distinguished Professor of the Department of Educational Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, United carlsoj@msu.edu	Reviewer 1: Mohammadreza Zarbakhsh Bahri ^{id} Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran. Email: M.Zarbakhsh@Toniau.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Mahdi Khanjani ^{id} Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Email: khanjani_m@atu.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Psychodynamic therapy, with its emphasis on insight...” the sentence “identity is not merely a fixed essence but a dynamic construction...” would benefit from a distinction between identity structure and identity content to enhance conceptual precision.

The sentence “The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions...” (Data Collection paragraph) would benefit from a brief example of 2–3 core questions to illustrate the depth and focus of the interview process.

In “Reflexivity was maintained by the researchers through analytic memoing...” (Data Analysis), consider expanding on triangulation or member checking to enhance the trustworthiness and confirmability of the analysis.

Although the gender distribution is presented, there is no subsequent analysis on whether identity shifts manifested differently across gender. Consider acknowledging this absence as a limitation or analyzing gender-specific narratives.

While rich quotes are provided, in “I used to expect people to hurt me. Now I give them a chance,” (under Trust Development) the participant’s demographic background (e.g., age or gender) could enhance contextual richness.

The discussion of “Narrative Coherence” (under Integration of Past and Present) would benefit from integration of narrative identity theory (e.g., McAdams’ stages of redemptive storytelling) to frame the transformation more theoretically.

There is some conceptual overlap between “Therapeutic Relationship as Catalyst” and “Transformation of Relational Patterns.” Consider whether these themes could be analytically separated more clearly, or merged with clarified distinctions.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence “Individuals do not form their identities in a vacuum...” (Introduction, paragraph 6) introduces important sociocultural dynamics but would benefit from integrating an explicit multicultural psychodynamic framework or naming a key theorist (e.g., Fanon or Sue).

In “The research sample consisted of 24 individuals from Germany...” (Methods and Materials, paragraph 1), include more detail about exclusion criteria or diagnostic profiles to clarify sample homogeneity or variability relevant to identity disturbance.

While the ethical statement is noted later, the Methods section should briefly include that ethical approval was obtained, citing the specific institutional review board (IRB) if possible.

Prior to Table 1, the summary paragraph would benefit from a stronger interpretive statement about how these five categories reflect psychodynamic theory (e.g., connecting them to ego functions or internal object relations).

In “Identity Fragmentation... captured experiences of feeling split between different roles...” the term “fragmentation” may connote dissociative pathology. Consider explaining whether participants described pathological dissociation or normative role conflict.

In the statement “These categories collectively demonstrate how sustained engagement...” (Discussion, paragraph 1), it would be valuable to note what specific gaps in the literature this study fills, beyond affirming prior findings.

The sentence “Participants’ ability to verbalize emotions and delay impulsive reactions...” (Discussion, Emotional Regulation section) could be expanded by relating this to Bion’s concept of ‘container-contained’ or Fonagy’s mentalization theory to deepen the psychodynamic interpretation.

The sentence “The participant sample was limited to individuals from Germany...” (Limitations) is appropriate, but consider discussing the impact of Western European cultural scripts on the process of narrative integration and autonomy development.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.