Learning through Individuation: How Indonesian Young People Seek a Personal Growth and Self-Development at Alternative Schooling

Ila Rosmilawati ✉

Department of Nonformal Education, FKIP, University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (UNTIRTA)

Info Articles	Abstract
	This present study explores students' voice who are not in formal education, but participate in non-formal education, especially in the Equivalency Education Program context. These learning experiences are investigated to understand how Indonesian young people seek a personal growth and self-development in the Equivalency Education context. Perspective transformation from depth psychology approach is applied as theoretical framework of this study. The depth psychology approach describes student's transformation/change as a process of individuation. It means that Indonesian young learners who experience learning as transformative through the process of individuation are those who make sense of their learning through their feelings and emotions, through images, and intuition. The findings suggest that different forms of learning outcomes are encountered by students. These categorisations are based on student reflection on their learning as a result of learning through individuation; (i) students' development of personal commitment; (ii) students' positive attitude toward schooling, and (iii) students' feeling of 'becoming different'. These three forms of learning outcomes are resulted from the ability of students to acknowledge the individuation process of learning in alternative school context.

✉ **Address correspondence:**
  Kantor Jurusan Pendidikan Luar Sekolah, FKIP, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Kampus C, Jl. Raya Ciwaru No. 25, Serang-Banten
  E-mail: irosmilawati@untirta.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand disadvantaged students' construction of learning experiences in the Indonesian Equivalency Education Program, in particular, the process of re-engaging in learning. The concept of student re-engagement in learning in this study refers to the ability of students to reflect upon and rethink their learning and school experiences (Zyngier, 2008). By reflecting on their learning experiences, students have the ability to bring those experiences into personal and social transformation for future opportunity and mobility. Despite some disadvantaged youth returning to school through non-mainstream pathways, little is known about how they re-engage in their learning after being unsuccessful in their first attempt.

The present study attempt to fill in the gaps framed by theory of transformative learning through the depth psychology approach (Boyd, 1994). The depth psychology approach defines *transformation* as individuation, 'a fundamental change in one's personality involving conjointly the resolution of personal dilemmas and expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration'. *Transformative learning* for individuation involves an intuitive process of discernment and receptivity as images and symbols from the individual, and collective unconscious are integrated into our consciousness.

The transformation based on this approach is a journey of coming to understand oneself through reflecting on the psychic structures that make up an individual's identity (Cranton, 2000). Individuation involves a deeper understanding of one's inner self, a sense of empowerment and confidence and a greater sense of self-responsibility (Boyd, 1994). Boyd explains that it is through the process of discernment that transformation will occur. The process of discernment leads to contemplative insight and personal understanding that enables life to be seen in relational wholeness. Boyd and Myers describe activities that can lead to such discernment and transformation, such as *receptivity* (listening), *recognition* (recognising the need to choose) and *grieving* (self-talk and emotional crisis) (Boyd, 1988, p. 280). *Receptivity* is a process whereby a person becomes more open to the internal forces that are manifested in images, symbols and archetypes.

Through receptivity, the person allows her/himself to interact with other ways of thinking. This allows the transformative journey to begin. *Recognition* leads to an acceptance of the values and truth of experience on the part of the person. The person encountering 'recognition' might lead her/himself to the third activity, *grieving*. Through the grieving process, transformation takes place in gradual acknowledgment of the loss of previous meaning perspectives. Within one's own psyche, a process of transformation is personal and extra-rational, focusing on the internal and subjective experience, leading to open dialogue with the Self. Among elements of transformation through this understanding are imagination, intuition and emotion (Dirkx, 2001).

Young learners who experience learning as transformative through the process of individuation are those who make sense of their learning through their feelings and emotions, through images and intuition. Disadvantaged youth who encounter this process may be those who experience difficult life situations, such as street children, beggars and young workers. Emotional crises in day-to-day life, such as how to deal with police patrols when street children sing for a living, open up dialogues with the internal self. This can give rise to a greater consciousness of the experience of being a street singer that can lead to a self-perception that constructs a better attitude within the self and carries through into social relationships.

Individuation is different from individualism as the later focuses on the needs of the self over the needs of others, while the former is an understanding of how a person fits in with others around him/her. Jung

(121/1971, as cited in Cranton & Roy, 2003, p. 90) defines individuation as:

> … *a process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology. Individuation, therefore, is a process of differentiation, having for its goal development of the individual personality.*

Learning through individuation, in this study, means that the student in the Equivalency Education Program can allow his or her greater expression and voice through interacting between, and relationship with, their inner feeling and thought. Every student has unique perspective on learning, teaching and schooling in which those perspectives shape their education. Therefore, this present study give the opportunity to Equivalency Education students to reflect their learning outcomes, which in turn will inform policy makers and practice educators. Two Equivalency Education schools involved in this study. Both are represented urban and suburban Equivalency Education Program in DKI Jakarta and Depok, West Java province, in which the former owned by the local government and the latter owned by the community. For research ethics purpose, in this study, both schools' name is changed into Wijaya Learning Centre and Mandiri Learning Centre. Wijaya learning centre is located in an urban metropolitan area of Jakarta.

The school is located in a middle-class residential neighbourhood, which is growing due to internal migration. The majority of students are migrant workers, such as a housemaid, babysitter, office boy, office cleaner, security, shopkeeper and construction labourer. The local government of Jakarta province manages the school to facilitate urban youth. Mandiri learning centre is located in the heart of a huge suburban bus and train station in Depok city. It facilitates street singers, hawkers and scavengers who became independent from their families at a young age to survive for a living. The school is operated by the local community.

This study employs perspective transformation/change on learning, specifically through individuation approach. As stated earlier, individuation is a process of differentiation, in which individual student is trying to find and develop their own individual personality. It is including to find and acknowledge their own learning outcomes as a result of their learning experience in the Equivalency Education Program. Therefore, the specific research question guide this study, it is *"how do Indonesian Equivalency Education students uncover the learning outcomes in alternative school context"?* The main argument of this study is to give student the voice to express what they mean by the learning outcomes in the Equivalency Education Program based on their learning experiences.

METHODS

The focus of this study is to uncover learning outcomes based on students' subjective judgement of their learning experiences. The research adopts an interpretive paradigm in which the goal of this study is to listen to the students' view of the situation, including subjective meaning of their learning experiences. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the students' situation and meaning for those involved, a case study approach is utilised to allow a comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon. Furthermore, characteristics of Equivalency Education Program in Indonesia are unique from each other because each has atypical features and context. The selection of cases is based on geographical locations to show the differences of each context, including urban and suburban. A similar strategy for selecting cases and determining participants was applied in this study. By using purposeful sampling method (Creswell, 2007), participants are selected to represent the criteria of gender, age, school grade and background.

This study seeks to gather student voices, rather than interview teachers or parents because student perspectives are

seldom represented. The students at Equivalency Education Program are regarded as marginalized in society and are excluded from educational policies and practices. Thus, this study presents the opportunity to begin redressing this and placing young people in a central and meaningful way in this study. It also aims to locate young people as active social agents to recognise and facilitate the student's 'voice' and 'agency'. In other words, this study authentically listens to the lives, experiences and educational aspirations of young people.

A total of 28 students were selected for this study through purposeful sampling method (Creswell, 2013), comprising of 15 female students and 13 male students. Collectively, the students are age between 14 and 25 years and studying Package B and Package C. To gather information and to answer the research questions, an in-depth interview and a focus group discussion are conducted. The aim of combining two methods of data collection is to provide in-depth and complex understanding of the issues. The first phase of data collection gathered from individual interviews, allows the research to focus directly on the personal views of each participant, and information from interview guided focus group discussions. The second phase is a focus group discussion that allows the comparison of members of the group, as well as obtains insight of data from interview process.

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data, which involves 'consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning' (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). Referring to Merriam (1998), data analysis for case study research can be conducted using the cross-case analysis in which all case studies are brought together in one level of analysis. The result of this process can lead to 'categories, themes or typologies that conceptualise the data from all cases, or it can result in building substantive theory offering an integrated framework covering multiple cases (Merriam, 1998, 195).

Therefore, this study will be reported based on themes emerges from abstractions or patterns across each case.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some Indonesian young people in this study encounter learning through individuation. They engage with learning and encounter transformative experience in the Equivalency Education Program by successfully separating themselves from the common value in society. Society may value the mainstream school more than the Equivalency Education Program. However, students in this group believe that the Equivalency Education Program reshapes the individual personality on this learning environment; they value the program similar to other educational forms in the country. These students break away from the collective assumption by critically questioning their habits of mind.

The students in this study sense that the Equivalency Education curriculum and learning environment meet their need and capacities. The Equivalency Education learning environment, including the material, tools and instruments (i.e. curriculum), and the localities that surround the learning situation, foster positive learning outcomes. These students become a 'new person', believing that the Equivalency Education reshapes their personality, as influenced by the learning environment. The students engage with learning because of self-belief, therefore, breaking away from collective assumptions about learning in the Equivalency Education Program. In other words, the students see the context of transformation/change from the development of individual personality (Jung, 1972, as cited in Cranton & Roy, 2003).

This study reveals three forms of learning outcomes relate to the depth psychology approach, in which the individuation constructs self-awareness as a perspective change. They are; (i) students' development of personal commitment; (ii) students' positive attitude toward schooling;

and (iii) students' feeling of becoming different. These learning outcomes are reflected by the student participants throughout this study. This shows that many students in this study encountered significant developmental and emotional throughout learning experience at Equivalency Education Program. Indeed, the outcome of learning were not demonstrated around traditional area of learning such the result of measurement of academic achievement on every student. Nevertheless, it is through reflection in learning experience that is significant as an effective based for current learning and for the possibility to make predictions of the student's future learning and life. Below is a detail description of these learning outcomes as reflected by the student participant in this study.

Students' development of personal commitment

In this study, Equivalency Education school climate influences student's development of personal commitment. Some young students in this study reported that they engage in learning in Equivalency Education after they found that the school is convenient and peaceful. After having trouble in their previous mainstream school (formal education) setting, young students struggle to build relationships with other students and teachers. However, they feel it is more convenient for them to study at Equivalency Education. It is because Equivalency Education has a small school organisation than formal schooling. One advantage of a small sized school is that students disassociated from juvenile delinquency. This situation allows some young students to renew commitment to learning, as evidenced by several who said they did not want to go back to mainstream school because the Equivalency Education Program prevents them from being drawn into behavioural problems. Dwipa commented:

This school is convenient. The students do not fight each other; they do not have an enemy. So, I feel like this school environment is suited for me. It is a relaxed environment actually. It may be because of the small school community. I do not want to go back to my previous (formal) school. I promise myself that even though I am studying the Equivalency Education, I will stay here until I graduate from high school. This school suits me – peace, quiet, and most importantly, now I am committing with my education. (Dwipa, male, 16 years old).

Dwipa reflects that the Equivalency Education Program gives him new learning experiences, such as a disassociation from juvenile delinquency, therefore, he can stay longer at school. This conscious development is about a level of awareness of students' beliefs and feelings about themselves (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 33). In this sense, the Equivalency Education 'responds to what the learner brings' (baxter & Bethke, 2009, p. 39) in which the learning context and culture have considered the experiences of the students for whom they are designed. Furthermore, school's structure, organisation and climate influence the social and academic development of their students. Freiberg (1999) points out that school influences student attachment, commitment, involvement, and most importantly, academic achievement through the school's resources and climate. Freiberg also states that the school climate is the heart and soul of a school. The school climate can either facilitate or constrain classroom instruction and student learning.

In the form of individuation, students' learning outcome in this group of students more about continuous self-organization. A student can create a network among his/her own ideas, attitudes, feeling and behaviour in order to self-organise as a road self-transformation (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Learning through individuation is active learning to seek one's own relevancy in the Equivalency Education Program for the sake of personal growth and self-development. For example, some students in this study who voluntarily participated in the Equivalency Education Program after experiencing alienation from mainstream schooling became

aware of the self, including the kind of learner they want to be, by developing self-understanding in the Equivalency Education environment. Tedjo from Wijaya Learning Centre stated that how he is committing to current education. He begins to think about his own future.

For me, no one has changed. If I want to skip from school, I will do it. However, three school days influence me so much. If I skip, even for just one day, I only have two days left for school. Another thing is I had experienced becoming a bad student, expelled from school. I feel like I do not want to do the same thing now. I have to think about my future education and life (Tedjo, 14 years old, Wijaya Learning Centre).

Finding a 'sense of self' for students in this group is a gradual process. Breaking away from a previous experience in a mainstream school, grouping and regrouping in a new learning environment with more like-minded others continue throughout a lifetime as students continue to refine who they are (Jung, 1971, as cited in Cranton & King, 2003). Sharp (2001) analysis Jung's four stages of the analytic process that represent individuation: (i) confession; (ii) elucidation; (iii) education; and (iv) transformation. According to the stages, the first step is confessions, which include everything that has been consciously concealed or repressed until a person becomes aware of the unconscious complexes and projections called elucidation. The next stage is education, the process of discovering a self-role as a social being who fits within the word. The last stage, transformation, is when a person is who he/she is meant to be.

Students' positive attitude toward schooling

Some students in this study have self-reported that they became school leavers due to behavioural problems at mainstream schools. Specifically, a large school community is frightening to some young people, therefore, they skip classes which leads to failure. For example, when the students enter Wijaya Learning Centre, they feel the school environment influences their feeling toward themselves and others, so they experience a more positive attitude towards schooling. A small school-size approach creates a positive atmosphere to be 'friendly' to young students who may have experienced behavioural problems in their previous mainstream school. In small schools, antisocial behaviour is less prevalent because the interaction among students is less complex. This finding is similar with Ossa (2005, p. 35) who reveals that smaller schools can teach students and faculty members how to behave as a community, thus disassociating from school violence.

Consistent with this, Mandiri Learning Centre students commented that their school secures them from the hardships of street life. The school provides street-based students with a safe environment that differs from street life, such as keeping them away from being bullied by others or being targeted by police officers. In other words, these students are protected from serious violent situations. This sense of security allows students to grow psychologically, socially and academically, as Iman explains:

Because our school location is in open area, many street children stay here. They feel safe to be here. I think this is good because many of them are attracted to come. This school is like a safe place for street children like us (Iman, 17 years old, Mandiri Learning Centre).

Transforming conduct from disruptive, truancy and threatening behaviours during school to obeying school rules is evidence that students are changing. However, Equivalency Education never set up the curriculum and its programs concerning behavioural intervention services to overcome disruptive behaviour. It appears that the Equivalency Education's school climate influences students to transform rather than its programs. For example, the school environment and the small number of students dissociates students from fighting at school. Furthermore, students in this study adds that the school's characteristic such as flexible scheduling, fair discipline policies and non-competitive

environment influence them into valuing the school experience.

This significant progress that students demonstrate positive attitude towards schooling at Equivalency Education Program is a result of their capacity to transform themselves and to enact positive forms of behaviour. A student gradually becomes conscious of his/her unique characteristics and qualities. Referring to this study, the structure of learning environments in the Equivalency Education Programs evokes powerful emotion among these students and, therefore, they develop their sense of self fully.

Now, I've become a better student as this school has disassociated me from bad habits. (Erwin, 14 years old, Wijaya Learning Centre).

The school is more real for me. I can sense that learning environment fits my circumstance and I feel confident about learning because… there is no more bad judgment. (Deni, 17 years old, Mandiri Learning Centre).

Deni from Mandiri Learning Centre feels a different emotion is influenced by the environment of the school. He does not feel like an 'outsider'. He is happy that the school is located near the train and bus station, a place where he can earn money as a street singer. The student uses the role of imagination to develop a way of knowing about his/her learning that is influenced by the surrounding environment and engendering the soul. In other words, unconsciously and images are often experienced as the manifestation of compulsion, obsessions or complexes take over our conscious awareness (Singer & Kimbles, 2004).

Erwin and Deni's expressions are resultant of their new knowledge about oneself through individually structured learning or through the journey of personal transformation as individuation (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 91). Students bring feelings and fantasies to their learning experiences. Given the appropriate conditions, a learner can enter into a conscious relationship with school images. The need for individuation of learning in this study is also echoed by other researchers in alternative schools in other

countries (te Riele, 2011; Watson, 2011) where alternative school experiences enhance student's self-esteem and positive disposition towards learning.

Students' feeling of 'becoming different'

Some of student participants in this study feels that Equivalency Education is different from the other kind of schooling. For example, students from Mandiri Learning Centre commented about their school location in the middle of a bus station. In the first time, the students witnessed unpleasant experiences when the local government tried to evict the school building because it occupies government land. One student shares a story that when he first enrolled at Mandiri Learning Centre, students studied at the mosque due to a lack of classroom. However, three years later, the school received donations and started to construct the present main building. At that time, as the majority of students were street children, the school building was developed close to the mosque in the train station to attract them to attend school. Below, a student with over five years at Mandiri Learning Centre tells of his experience:

In the process of my school establishment, more than three times I heard that my school would be evicted for building a mall because my school is in a strategic location, which is close to a bus station, train station, local government office and other malls surrounding it. However, the school leader defended the existence. I'm very proud of him (Iman, 17 years old, Mandiri Learning Centre).

In witnessing this experience, Iman feels that his school is different from the others. The differences concern the location, historical events and the role it plays in accommodating disadvantaged youth, which traditional schooling cannot do. Clark and Wilson (1991) emphasise the importance of context and role shaping transformative learning. Also, Scott's (2003) study of transformative learning and the exploration of social action in organisations reports that transformation includes structural changes in the psyche of the individual and its structures

of society. She sees transformation of an individual's perspective (rational worldview) as a change in the surface structures of the psyche, while the 'social construction of transformation co-emerges in the learner and the setting, that is, the personal and the social in dialectical relationship transform' (Scott, 2003, p.275). Student feelings of 'becoming different' also come from the school environment and activities that lead student to a sense of belonging to the school. Female students mention that their school is unique, and its uniqueness makes them honoured to engage with the school environment:

This school is unique. The teachers and school leader do not want to build the school just like another school building. Our class is made from a used truck container. Therefore, our school building design is different if we compare it with another schools. One of the reasons is that used truck containers are easy to be removed if there is an eviction. It is because originally the school was built on land that people donated to the school organisation. This condition made us aware that this school is valuable for us and because of this, we love our school (Group of female students at Mandiri Learning Centre).

Located in the middle of a bus station, Mandiri Learning Centre offers a "different look" and environment which links between the environment and school activities. School activities is designed to serve the different needs and diverse backgrounds of Mandiri Learning Centre students. Nationally, it is supported by the Indonesian government in which since early 2014, new academic curricula are designed based on livelihood issues, household management, local economics and work ethics. Forty per cent of the curriculum emphasises life skills through work-oriented programs. The curriculum consists of morale-building and academically oriented subjects that are equivalent to minimal competencies at mainstream education levels, and it is enrich with life skills-oriented subjects. Below is student's comment about positive sides about the Equivalency Education activities and curriculum. Based on student's view, it is

argued that expanding on the school activities and curriculum can promote transformative learning. The psychic field that surrounds and saturates the learning environment can also influence the personal energy of teachers and students. Below is student's comment about the uniqueness of the school.

If we think positive about this school, this school is unique for me. Can you imagine that our school is in the middle of a bus station community? Are we having a 'real life' and feeling close to the school and community? The students and people interact with each other, just like everybody matters. Sometimes the student learns how to drive a minibus (if they want to be a bus driver in the future); we sell food to other people during the schooling process. This school attracts many disadvantaged youth and children and also parents because we are different; it is unique (Iman, 17 years old, Mandiri Learning Centre).

The feeling of being different is mentioned by a number of students in this study. The students feel proud of 'becoming different' from other school students. This emotion can be used as a resource for learning. Seen positively, it can be the basis of emotionally-based transformation in learning. For students in this group, education can be a transformative experience. It is when the students do shift towards understanding themselves and the world around them, this is learning of a great importance. The evolution of one's way of thinking, seeing and doing things is associated with personal growth. Indeed, it is a demanding process that changes the personality or identity, and occurs only in very special situations of profound significance for the learner.

CONCLUSION

Such learning that makes a different to disadvantaged lives is not merely learning manifested by academic achievement, but learning that empower students with self-beliefs and subjective judgement. This study reveals that Equivalency Education Program has dynamics culture and mechanism, in which does not lead to troubling

'psychological deduction' for students, but invites them to develop their confidence through engagement in learning and soul. Different and rich learning opportunities afforded to students in the Equivalency Education Program provides justification to challenge the mainstream school (Wringley, Thomson & Lingard, 2012).

The spirit of the Equivalency Education Program serves the needs and educational orientation of young people, as well as provides a lesson for mainstream schooling to

work more through students' eyes of imagination than with mind or head. Understanding imagination as the source of learning has profound implications for how learners think about, design and implement their learning for life. For students who encounter learning through individuation, the Equivalency Education Program is a counter space that promotes emotional and psychological health.

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