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## **An Integrated Therapeutic Approach to Enhance Quality of Life: A case study**

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### **Abstract**

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), attachment theory, and humanistic psychology improve mental health by restructuring individuals' cognition, relationship dynamics, and self-exploration. This study aimed to examine the relationships between CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in improving the client's mental well-being. This study adopted qualitative methods, including observational data, counselling transcripts, and interviews, involving only one client. The findings showed that integrating therapeutic methods effectively addresses profound psychological challenges. The findings indicate a positive progression in the client's overall quality of life, suggesting the potential of integrated approaches in fostering meaningful counselling.

**Keywords:** Quality of Life Enhancement; Integrated Therapeutic Approach

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### **1.0 Introduction**

In the fast-changing field of mental health counselling, one of the critical aspects is the shift towards a more comprehensive approach that utilises a range of therapeutic methods to address the challenges deriving from psychological issues effectively. Humanistic psychology, attachment theory, and cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT), which have been proven effective in addressing various mental health conditions (Cain, 2021), are currently being explored in conjunction. Mental health professionals are increasingly intrigued by the convergence of therapeutic approaches since they hold the potential to significantly enhance the overall well-being of patients grappling with psychological distress.

The integration of these divergent views embodies a more all-encompassing understanding of the complexities of mental health. It offers a more holistic framework for dealing with stress and anxiety-related issues. This integrated approach aims to provide a more thorough and tailored solution by merging the most effective components of each approach, leading to more substantial and enduring improvements in individuals' mental well-being and overall quality of life. The integration of therapeutic methods is an advanced and effective strategy in mental health counselling, which is also a significant advancement in therapeutic methodologies.

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This study emphasises the significance of examining the efficacy of an integrated therapy approach, specifically for individuals who experience intense stress and anxiety, which is common in this rat-raced working environment. It was found that mental stress and psychological concerns are highly alert, which leads to a decrease in work focus (Subramaniam et al., 2020). Exploring how this comprehensive strategy might alleviate these sources of stress is highly relevant and timely, given the numerous challenges individuals encounter in such challenging settings. This study seeks to contribute valuable insights into the dynamic field of mental health care in occupational settings. The main objective of this study is to explore how the integrated therapeutic approach can aid a client in effectively coping with the stress in their workplace.

The integrated therapeutic approach enhances the well-being of individuals experiencing persistent work-related stress and anxiety. It helps effectively tackle anxiety and stress-related issues, ultimately resulting in an improvement of the client's overall quality of life. The client can restructure the negative thoughts with positive thoughts through CBT. The attachment theory enables the client to understand his or her earlier relationship experiences, which might impact his or her emotional state. Hence, this study aims to examine the relationships between CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in improving the client's mental well-being.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Integrating humanistic psychology, attachment theory, and CBT provides a complete framework for complex psychological disorders. CBT can identify and change negative thought patterns associated with stress and work anxiety (Taube et al., 2019). An individual's previous attachment experiences affect their emotions and relationships, according to attachment theory (Guzmán-González et al., 2020). Human psychology emphasises compassionate therapy environments to promote self-discovery and human growth (Rebillon et al., 2023). Multiple therapy methods help comprehend people's psychological needs and provide a more thorough treatment strategy (Can & Halfon, 2021).

Numerous research shows that CBT treats a variety of psychological problems. CBT is beneficial for tinnitus (Drahman et al., 2023). It also helps university students with anxiety symptoms alleviate depression (Cincidda et al., 2022). CBT plus medicine helped 80% of anxiety patients in another trial (Premo et al., 2020), confirming its efficacy.

CBT therapy programmes must consider the psychological issue and patient population (Murphy et al., 2020). Each case is unique. Thus, CBT must be adjusted to optimize its benefits. Recognizing CBT's many uses and complexities across a spectrum of psychological issues helps practitioners integrate CBT with attachment theory and humanistic psychology into an integrated therapy paradigm. This integration may offer more tailored and effective solutions for complex psychological difficulties, especially in stressful environments like the workplace, by carefully combining the best characteristics of each therapy.

Attachment theory is often used in family courts to understand relationship dynamics and the long-term implications of early attachment experiences on individuals' welfare. Research on attachment theory and control-mastery theory found intricate linkages between severe mental diseases and dysfunctional attachment (Wrobel et al., 2022). Attachment theory, research, and assessments in child custody decisions have also been debated. This emphasises the need for thorough and nuanced therapeutic interventions, notably in family court (Forslund et al., 2021). More research stresses attachment theory's role in explaining human behaviour and guiding therapies to improve relationships and well-being.

Humanistic psychology extends beyond therapy. Emphasizing individual experiences and personal development promotes holistic health. Several innovative therapies include humanistic principles. The collaborative creation of transdiagnostic internet medicines shows that notions are flexible. Expert interviews with various psychotherapists show this strategy combines systemic and psychodynamic perspectives. This relationship improves therapy by highlighting psychological framework linkages.

Humanistic concepts also encourage family therapists to take a critical, relational approach to sensitive matters like suicide. This method emphasises compassionate and socially just therapy by highlighting structural oppression's probable influence in these situations. These guidelines help therapists address rooted issues and create a compassionate and understanding therapy environment.

The extensive research review highlights the benefits of combining humanistic psychology, attachment theory, and CBT to treat complex psychological difficulties. This integration enables experts to build solutions that exceed expectations by incorporating the benefits of each therapy style. By integrating these approaches, therapists can design personalized, comprehensive treatments for each patient. This creative combination improves treatment techniques and expands human behaviour understanding, which boosts the possibility of permanent psychological well-being improvements.

## 3.0 Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research methodology involving collecting and meticulously analysing observational data, transcripts from counselling sessions, and semi-structured interviews with client. This study's primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews, as they offer a comprehensive insight into the efficacy of therapy in real-world settings (Levitt et al., 2021). This study was exclusively comprised of a solitary client who engaged seven counselling sessions spanning about two months. Engaging one client in this study context was appropriate as it involved an in-depth exploration of the counselling outcomes over multiple counselling sessions and interviews. This study adopted a case study approach, which deeply investigated the counselling process.

The qualitative data were collected via interviews and observations to acquire the client's experiences and perspectives regarding the integrated therapy strategy. The qualitative data obtained from counselling sessions, including observational data, counselling session transcripts, and interviews, were subjected to thematic analysis. This involved identifying patterns and themes relevant to the client's experiences and perceptions of the integrated therapy method. The study placed significant attention on the dependability and

trustworthiness of interviews. Therefore, peer debriefing and intercoder were utilized to examine the analysed codes from the interview and assess the amount of agreement. The study documented a coefficient of agreement of 0.91, indicating a robust level of agreement. When using Cohen's Kappa for benchmarking, an agreement level above 0.80 indicates a significant agreement (Dettori & Norvell, 2020).

The observation notes documented the client's emotions, personal experiences, and behavioural tendencies, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of the efficacy of each therapeutic strategy. The implementation of this qualitative framework facilitated comprehension of the client's journey and the intricate interplay among different therapeutic methods.

The interview protocols underwent meticulous design and scrutiny by a panel of proficient counsellors to guarantee the study instrument's elevated validity and dependability. Some interview questions were, "What changes do you notice in your self-concept after the counselling session?" and "How do you feel the counselling has helped you?". The data-gathering strategy encompassed conducting semi-structured interviews and meticulously recording field notes derived from counselling observations. Ensuring the client's consent and maintaining confidentiality were the primary concerns in this study since it followed ethical norms in counselling. Hence, this study only involved one client. The client provided informed consent. Simultaneously, the counsellor adhered to professional boundaries with the client during every counselling session.

## 4.0 Findings

The study's results served to cover the research objective to examine the relationships between CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in enhancing the client's mental well-being.

### 4.1 Progress in addressing client's uncertainties

The findings revealed the improvement of the client's transforming experience in confronting existential uncertainties. At first, the client had difficulty expressing her thoughts. This was evident from her challenges with maintaining eye contact and showing signs of fear and stress, such as fidgeting, as observed in the data. The initial signs indicated that the client was experiencing a widespread sense of discomfort and stress due to uncertainties that come from her existential thoughts. This distress not only affected the client's emotions but also impacted on their relationships with others.

The thematic narrative is profound due to the valuable insights obtained from the semi-structured interviews done across numerous sessions. Based on the data collected, it was evident that the client had shown significant progress in her ability to handle conversations related to existential issues during the therapy process. The introduction of journaling as a therapeutic technique was particularly significant. It served as a crucial catalyst in providing the client with a means of self-expression and contributed to a palpable reduction of existential concerns. Simultaneously, the interview findings revealed a substantial decrease in anxiety levels, suggesting a favourable progression in the client's emotional state. According to the client, "The therapy helps me to understand and fix my negative thoughts. It makes it easier to handle my uncertainties about life."

The findings highlight the effectiveness of therapy interventions in improving the client's ability to deal with her issues and problems. In addition to improving her well-being, the observed progression indicates a more profound and resilient involvement in the therapeutic process. Journaling highlights the diverse therapeutic approaches used to cope with complex emotional challenges.

### 4.2 Integration of therapeutic methods

The observation findings showed the counsellor's skilful use of CBT in implementing the interventions to help the client modify negative thought patterns and behaviours. This counselling method is crucial in advocating the improvement in the client's cognitive restructuring process, resulting in improved coping mechanisms and behavioural adaptations.

In addition, the counsellor demonstrated a keen use of attachment exploration, thoroughly examining the client's relational dynamics and past experiences to reveal the fundamental factors affecting current emotional reactions and interpersonal relationships. The counsellor enhanced the client's self-awareness and comprehension of relationships by incorporating attachment theory into the therapeutic approach.

Furthermore, the integration of humanistic ideals in the therapeutic relationship was evident, creating an atmosphere of empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard. This method created a secure environment for the client to genuinely examine and communicate their emotions, promoting a favourable setting for personal development and self-approval.

During the interview, the client acknowledged that "The counselling helped me to change the way of thinking about doubts. I see things in a more balanced view now, which lowers my anxiety levels." The interview excerpt provided by the client further corroborated the observation findings made during the sessions. The client skillfully identified and expressed the specific instances where each treatment technique clearly impacted their therapeutic progress. During the interview, the client expressed, "I feel I am becoming my best self and living the way that reflects my values. I feel much better." She has gained a more profound sense of self-appreciation and an increased awareness of her potential. This finding emphasised the significant impact of cognitive restructuring in changing individuals' thought patterns and views on attachment by understanding their emotional reactions and humanistic viewpoints in promoting self-awareness and personal growth.

### 4.3 Rebuilding social connections and cultivating self-compassion

The study provides essential insights from the findings, contributing to a more comprehensive comprehension of the client's progress. The client showed improvement in fostering initiative to restore links and relationships with the local community. While she has demonstrated significant progress in taking the initiative, there are still lingering worries regarding her self-compassion.

In the interview, the client expressed, "I learned how my early relationships shaped how I see the world. Understanding this helps me see why I find deep questions about life really hard." The integrated counselling techniques instil a sense of optimism in her, which helps her to alleviate concerns about her status and situation. Hence, building social connections boosts the client's self-compassion and allows her to perceive situations differently. From the observation data, the counsellor demonstrated skilled intervention, focusing on promoting self-compassion in the client through customised activities that enhance her self-confidence. This strategy focuses on identifying patterns of self-doubt that promote better self-concept and improve social skills.

The counsellor's astuteness in addressing the client's worries about potential negative perceptions from surrounding people indicated a proactive approach in empowering the client with effective coping strategies. The integrated therapeutic methods equip the client with self-help skills to manage social circles more effectively, thus building resilience in the client to cope with future obstacles.

## 5.0 Discussion

The discussion of this paper focuses on the relationships between CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in enhancing the client's mental well-being based on this study's findings.

### 5.1 Progress in addressing client's uncertainties

Prior to the counselling session, the client exhibited distress, manifested by challenges in articulating opinions and a tendency to withdraw herself, which is indicative of anxiousness. Integrating CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in the therapeutic approach facilitated the client's confrontation with existential uncertainties. This counselling approach facilitates a more substantial enhancement in engaging the client throughout the therapeutic procedure (Heidenreich et al., 2021). Writing as a therapeutic method enables the client to articulate her thoughts and emotions, thus alleviating her existential worries. Research conducted by Sohal et al. (2022) has confirmed the efficacy of journaling as a valuable tool in counselling. During the interview following the seven counselling sessions, the client conveyed that she has realised that her anxiety has diminished, indicating a reduction in her anxiety level and an improvement in her emotional well-being. Therefore, incorporating of the three therapeutic modalities effectively tackles the psychological challenges in the client, leading to enhanced well-being.

### 5.2 Integration of therapeutic methods

The integration of CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology is essential in alleviating the challenges faced by the client that impact her well-being. Adopting integrated therapeutic methods must tailor interventions based on the client's issues and problems (Momani & Berry, 2017). In order to ensure the effective integration of therapeutic methods, it is essential to consider the client's needs and preferences in the integration strategies. It is highlighted that adopting an integrated counselling approach with contemporary methodologies to address the influence of cultural and societal elements on suicidal inclinations is essential, especially in the context of building resilience (Ellis, 2022). Hence, in this study, the client showed significant improvement in managing her lifestyle and relationships with people around her, which improves her overall quality of life. Nyman-Salonen et al. (2021) also highlight the importance of integrating nonverbal communication strategies in couple therapy to enhance the client's well-being and improve the bond.

### 5.3 Rebuilding social connections and cultivating self-compassion

According to another emerging pattern in the data, the client showed progress in re-establishing social relationships and cultivating self-compassion. Prior to the counselling sessions, the client experienced ambivalent emotions regarding interpersonal connections. Nevertheless, during the counselling sessions, the client improved in her proactive efforts to re-establish connections with her family and friends. The implementation of self-compassion exercises led to notable enhancements in her ability to cope with social anxiety and self-doubt. Therefore, incorporating therapeutic techniques enhances her self-assurance, a comprehensive strategy for fostering the client's overall welfare. Hence, the integrated therapeutic framework is all-encompassing. This highlights the advantageous approach of incorporating diverse therapeutic methodologies in counselling to offer all-encompassing and customized assistance specifically designed to tackle the issues of each particular client (McAdory et al., 2015).

## 6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

Within the context of enhancing the client's mental well-being, this study aims to examine the relationships between CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology in improving the client's mental well-being. In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrated that the integration of therapeutic approaches gave a different perspective, which has contributed to the development of a holistic counselling strategy for mental health. By utilising integrated therapeutic methods, counsellors can personalise better counselling interventions to meet each client's specific requirements. The integrated approach that incorporates the methods of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), the concepts of attachment theory, and the essential features of humanistic psychology help create more holistic counselling approaches. Additionally, it serves as a robust framework that helps individuals enhance their self-concept and confidence, which in turn contributes to the promotion of higher well-being.

The limitation of this study is the sample size, as the study only involved a client, which limits the applicability of the findings. Furthermore, the qualitative quality of the research may need to possess the statistical rigour typically found in quantitative investigations. The utilisation of self-report data and the inherent subjective interpretation involved in thematic analysis create potential biases despite establishing the trustworthiness of the findings through peer debriefing and intercoder.

This study contributed to the comprehension of how integrating CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology effectively improves the mental health of individuals. The results highlighted the effectiveness of combining the three therapeutic approaches to address psychological issues and promote significant improvement in terms of well-being.

The recommendation for improvement includes future research efforts to prioritise the inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Expanding the research to a broader range of individuals to provide more holistic findings is recommended. On the other hand, it is also recommended to incorporate quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain more comprehensive findings on the effectiveness of integrated therapeutic methods in contributing to mental well-being.

In identifying the new directions for further research, the study could be expanded to explore counsellors' factors, such as their expertise and the impact on the effectiveness of integrated therapeutic methods. Cultural considerations could be the aspects influencing the effectiveness. Hence, further research could venture into the diverse cultural aspects of counselling, especially in the Malaysian context due to multiculturalism. Another direction which could be explored in this study is the integration of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in counselling techniques.

Future studies can further advance the knowledge of integrated treatment techniques and the complex effects on client's mental health by addressing these suggestions and investigating novel avenues.

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None

## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper provides a theoretical contribution in terms of the integration of CBT, attachment theory, and humanistic psychology. It provides practical applications in enhancing client's quality of life through integrated therapeutic methods

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