



Identity Crisis and Self-Identity: A Reinterpretation of Karl Jaspers's Transcendental Philosophy and Existenz

IKECHUKWU MONDAY OSEBOR, GRACE OGELENYA
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

Abstract. Karl Jaspers' existentialist philosophy revolves around man and his concrete existence. His ideas of philosophical faith and transcendence met differing opinions due to their metaphysical nature. The philosophical faith is theistic, and the struggle against self-identity, which led to the identity crisis. The identity crisis is a psychosocial conflict of the mind. The effects of identity crisis include posttraumatic disorder (PTSD). PTSD reawakens traumatic memory, creating depression, anxiety and linked to identity crisis. Using the method of hermeneutics, this paper suggests the application of Karl Jaspers's philosophy of existence to solving the problem of the identity crisis.

Keywords: Philosophical Faith, Transcendence, Existenz, Self-identity, identity crisis

1. Introduction

Karl Theodor Jaspers born on 23 February 1883 – 26 February 1969), was a German-Swiss lawyer, psychiatrist, and a philosopher and was influenced by Soren Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Immanuel Kant.

Karl Theodor Jaspers Philosophical faith and transcendence, received different interpretations from scholars, due metaphysical nature. The philosophical faith is understood adequately, only if philosophy itself is clearly understood. The concern of philosophy is to "elucidate." Elucidation is the clarification that occurs when agency outside philosophy; instead, elucidating itself (Armin,2007).

The philosophical faith is a metaphysical penetration into the realm of being, which confronts existential limitations. Philosophical faith is paradoxical and uncertain. Those who pursue this type of knowledge must accept an attitude of philosophical relativism. The philosophical faith is dogmatism. It undermines

the claims that transcendental knowledge is individual experience. . Identity crisis has serious long-term effects. It includes PTSD, depression, and misinterpretation of phenomena (Monday^d, 2020).

Karl Jaspers interpreted as an agnostic philosopher. For him the idea of God is incomprehensible and every attempt to understand God remains futile (Omorogbe,1999:57), (Idjakpo, 2015). The fundamental experience of man is linked to freedom. God guides man through his freedom and decisions. It is very difficult to know the mind of God and there is no objective way to know what he wants (Omorogbe,1999:57).

Philosophers live in the empirical world. The investigation of the empirical world is the goal of the modern scientific method. Jaspers embraced science, and it is an opportunity to work for self-illumination and self-development (Suzanne, 2007). "The power of science to confirm an individual's position in the world coupled with the assertion that science holds the key to a true, objective account of life experience" (Suzanne, 2007), (Karl Jaspers, 1970:p.201). Philosophy creates awareness of one's own powerlessness and weakness. Philosophy is relevant to the concrete existence of the individual because it question the being of man and the nature of predetermined being. However, science unable to give answers to the question of being but motivates man scientifically (Hermann, 1993: p. 721).

Philosophy must provide answers to the identity crisis. Philosophy would neither conjure illusory, fantasy. It delivers skepticism for the liberation of man. (Stegmüller,1969). A true philosophy cannot abandon philosophical rationality for dogma but it is the formation and justification of knowledge for the common good of humanity. Philosophy has an inescapable link with development (Hermann, 1993:

p. 721). We posit that human development would require the transcendental and empirical knowledge for holistic understanding of realities.

This study recommends the teaching and learning of Karl Jaspers's philosophy of existence to avoid the identity crisis. The philosophy of existence would help to establish the authenticity of man. We establish that the transcendental knowledge has failed to explain the concrete human existence. The concrete existence is an existential enlightenment, which deals with self-identity (Omorogbe,1999:57). This study is a hermeneutical investigation of identity crisis and self-identity: a reinterpretation of Karl Jaspers's transcendental philosophy and existence

2. Methodology of Study

This study employs the hermeneutical method. The hermeneutics philosophy was introduced by a German historian, psychologist and sociologist; Wilhelm Dilthey. This method has to do with the interpretation of phenomena such as human behavior, language, culture, belief and so on. This hermeneutics involves "interpreting" words, terms or concepts used in an inquiry. The rationale for hermeneutical view is to give insights into conceptual contents as expressed. However, philosophical interpretations may not give final answer to the problems of identity crisis. Nonetheless, It is a tool that allow researchers to perform wider and more in-depth studies to the problems confronting humanity and proffering solution to them (Monday, 2021), (Monday^c, O. I. 2020).

3. Transcendence, Philosophical Faith and Identity Crisis

The philosophy of transcendence is an upturned of Karl Marx philosophy of materialism. The transcendental inquiry constructs knowledge outside the senses [Transcendental, n-d]. It negates the concrete experience of the individual. The transcendence is the ability to move beyond the world of time and space (Omorogbe,1999:57). It is objective knowledge that struggles against self-identity (Ottuh, & Idjakpo, 2020) . Philosophical faith is faith originality and a metaphysical penetration into the realm of being. It is paradoxical, uncertain and philosophical dogmatism.

Karl Jaspers the agnostic philosopher, maintain that God is incomprehensible and every attempt to understand God remains futile. Man is nothingness and lost in the world of existence. The human

experience is link with freedom because God guides man through his freedom and through his decision, in this sense, it is very difficult to know the mind of God and no objective way to know what he wants (Omorogbe,1999:57). .

Religion is an objectified presentation of truth. It fails to acknowledge the concrete existence of the individual (Ottuh, & Idjakpo, 2021). Transcendence is a narration of religion. It limits rationality and self-identity. Dogmatism is a characteristic of religion, which revealed truth-claims by eliminating self-criticality, communicative reason, human capacity of truthfulness and existential self-knowledge (Karl, 2019).

4. Philosophy of Existence: The Panacea to Identity Crisis

Existenz is subjective reasoning and the sum total of reality, which differentiates real things from fictional ones. Existence is the awareness of being, which inspire scientific and common sense knowledge (Guy Bennett, 2017:p.1-8). Existence would cancel itself, if it claimed to know what man is in totality. "It is impossible to provide a complete empirical explanation of the world, and there is no Supreme Being to help us explain it" (Jaspers, 2018). We maintain that absurdity and unintelligibility of the real world extends to the identity crisis, which renders man incomprehensible (Stegmüller,1969). Existenz is empirical and non-objective actuality of self-hood. Self-identity is personal autonomy, existential freedom, authenticity and undetermined identity crisis. Self-identity is the realization of existence. (Onyenuru, 2014). (Monday^b,2018). Human beings must display "possible existence through self-identity. Existence is the radical freedom to decide and be responsible for human actions (Karl, 2019), (Guy Bennett, 2017:p.1-8). Existence is the reflection upon the horizon of life, and accepting possibilities. Although, freedom limited by situations, which I do not have the power to change, I was born by a certain parent, at a particular place and under certain circumstance. I do not choose these factors nor did I have the power to change them. I am not prone to the attack of diseases, suffering, pain, death, or failure. These are simply limiting factors that affect human existence and render it insecure (Omorogbe,1999:57).

Human existence cannot be secure through public accounting, nations, states, local governments and religion. Indeed, no one can provide an absolute security to human existence (Omorogbe,1999:57). The acknowledgment of limiting factors, coupled

with the strive for authenticity is inspired by self-identity and the accountability to others. We contend that transcendence is authenticity if inspired by social responsibility of human existence (Ikechukwu, and Marta 2022)..

5. Conclusion

Karl jasper is one among the existentialist philosophers that emphasizes on the concrete existence. For him, man is a unique being. The uniqueness of the individual presupposes others. The individual freedom is self-identity, which manifests through the empirical world. The manifestation of empirical world is the existence of others. We maintained that philosophical transcendence downplayed self-identity. It had failed to proof the self-identity of man. This paper recommends the teaching and learning of Karl Jasper's philosophy of existence to solving the problem of identity crisis, which confronts the borders of human existence.

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