# 요나 콤플렉스의 형성요인 및 극복방안 연구

JIA FULAN\*, 백형기\*\* 국제심리상담연구소\*. 한국심리상담복지학회\*\*

# Research on the forming factors and overcoming of Jonah complex

Fu-Lan Jia\*, Hyung-Ki Baek\*\*

Internation Psychological Consultation Center\* Korean Psychological Counseling Welfare Association\*\*

요 약 요나 콤플렉스는 미국의 유명한 심리학자 매슬로에 의해 제안된 심리 용어이다. 요컨대 요나 콤플렉스는 성장에 대한 두려움이다. 그것은 정신 역학 이론의 가설에서 비롯된다. "사람들은 실패를 두려워할 뿐만 아니라 성공도 두려워한 다." 그것은 기회 앞에서 회피하고 후퇴하는 일종의 심리를 나타낸다. 이것은 우리가 잘 할 수 있는 것을 하지 못하게 하 거나 심지어 우리의 잠재력을 탐구하는 것을 피하도록 이끄는 감정적인 상태이다. 자기실현이라는 관점에서 보면, 그것은 자기실현에 심리적 장애물이다. 본 논문은 다음과 같이 구성되어 있다. 제1장에서는 본 논문의 연구 배경과 중요성을 설명 하고, 제2장에서는 이론적인 근거를 설명하고, 제3장에서는 본 논문의 연구 방법이 문학적인 방법이라고 설명하고, 제4장에 서는 요나의 형성 이유를 분석한다. 다섯 번째 장에서는 요나 콤플렉스를 극복하는 방법을 자세히 설명했다.

주제어 요나 콤플렉스, 자존감, 군중심리, 오이디푸스 갈등, 안전지대

Abstract Jonah complex is a psychological term put forward by Maslow, a famous American psychologist. In short, "Jonah complex" is the fear of growth. It comes from a hypothesis in psychodynamic theory: "people are not only afraid of failure, but also afraid of success." It represents a kind of psychology of self-evasion and retreat in the face of opportunities. It is an emotional state, which leads us not to do what we can do well, or even to avoid exploring our potential. From the perspective of self-actualization, it is a psychological obstacle to self-actualization. This paper consists of the following parts: the first chapter describes the research background and significance of this paper; the second chapter describes the theoretical basis of this paper; the third chapter explains that the research method of this paper is literature method; the fourth chapter analyzes the reasons for the formation of Jonah complex in detail; the fifth chapter describes how to overcome Jonah complex.

Key Words Jonah complex, Self-esteem, Herd mentality, Oedipus conflict, Comfort zone

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Corresponding Author: Hyung-Ki Baek

(Korean Psychological Counseling Welfare Association)

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# Research background

In today's society, the pursuit of success, the desire to change the social class, and the desire to break through our own limitations have become hot topics both in real life and on the internet. It seems that we have never stopped exploring these problems, and there are many young people who are obsessed with the works and ideas of success, trying to change their own destiny. However, is there a shortcut to break through self-limitations and achieve success? This thesis will discuss the theme from the perspective of Abraham Maslow's Jonah complex theory, and study the restriction of Jonah complex on people's self-esteem level and personal potential.

As we all know, people's self-esteem level is affected by their own environment. Poverty or poor living environment is undoubtedly the important factors limiting people's self-esteem level. However, a follow-up study of 698 children in Kauai, Hawaii, found that not every poor child has a miserable future. Some children have got rid of the vicious circle of poverty and become competitive, confident and successful people.[1] Another follow-up study of London's high crime slums found similar results. These children who come out of poverty have one thing in common, that is, they have a high level of self-esteem or a high sense of self-worth.

What is self-esteem? Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall attitude towards himself. You can do a simple test to answer these questions: do you think you are a valuable person? Do you think you have many good qualities? Are you satisfied with yourself? Are you positive about yourself? If your answer is yes, then you are a person with high self-esteem. People with high self-esteem highly identify with their own ability and their own value of existence, thus presenting an image of self-confidence. At the same time, those people with high self-esteem will enter a virtuous circle: because they show the good image expected by the society in their life and work, the society will also give them benign feedback, making them constantly improve their self-esteem. On the contrary, if you often tend to feel like a failure, if you often feel like nothing, you may be a person with low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem often present to the society self-abandonment, self-pity, self-contempt and so on, which we call self-injurious image. So, are those children who come out of poverty really successful because of their high self-esteem?

The laboratory of Beijing Normal University of China has done such an experiment: college students are divided into four categories: the group from rich families, having high self-esteem and low self-esteem; the other group from poor families with high and low self-esteem. The experimenters scanned their brain structures, especially a core organ deep in the brain: the hippocampus. Hippocampus is the center of learning, memory, stress management and other psychological and cognitive functions. The results show that the average volume of hippocampus of college students from poor families is significantly smaller than those from rich families. This result is consistent with previous psychological research, which confirms that poverty not only makes our material environment scarce, but also affects our brain structure and function[2]. However, we had another result of this study, let us see a glimmer of light to break the curse of poverty! The study also found that there was no significant difference between the average hippocampal volume of college students from poor families with high self-esteem and those from rich families. This study tells us a very important point, that is, self-esteem can establish an indestructible defense line between the stressors of poverty and people's psychological world, and help people get rid of the vicious circle of poverty. Self-esteem is an important human capital, which we call psychological capital. How much money you have belongs to material capital. The level of material

capital determines whether we are rich or poor in the material world, while the level of psychological capital determines whether our psychological world is rich or poor. So, what factors affect our self-esteem? Maslow's Jonah complex is an important factor restricting our self-esteem, which is also the core content of this paper.

# 2. Research significance

### 2.1 Theoretical significance

Jonah complex is a theory proposed by American social psychologist Abraham Maslow. Although some researchers have explained or further studied the theory, these studies are scattered and systematic in general, and have not made a deep discussion on the formation mechanism and overcoming methods of Jonah complex, which makes the theory have practical guiding significance. This paper will make a thorough and systematic discussion on the theory from these aspects, and finally propose methodology to guide our actions. This is undoubtedly a perfect theory.

#### 2.2 Practical significance

In society, pursuing self breakthrough and success are undoubtedly the eternal topic. Countless young people hope to achieve remarkable achievements in society in various ways, whether through school study, hard work in the workplace or biographical resume of successful people through research. However, many people are confused about this. Their efforts seem mechanical and ineffective. Although they are tired in their body and mind, they have achieved little effect. Many even complain about the injustice of fate and abandon themselves. "Your subconsciousness, you call it destiny," said Carl Gustav Jung, a famous Swiss psychoanalyst[3]. Indeed, there are many subconscious ways of manipulating our thinking and behavior in the darkness, among which "Jonah complex" is a very big constraint on the road of

success. Many people do not realize that they are controlled by this negative complex, and do not know how the complex is formed and deeply rooted in themselves. Naturally, it can't be overcome. This result is that we have always ignored the blind spot in our personality and made a lot of blind efforts. Finally, the reason why we can't achieve our goal is attributed to "bad luck". In this paper, the author will reveal the secret of Jonah complex in detail, showing us how we are manipulated by it, how to get rid of its control, and finally how to realize self breakthrough and personal potential. Undoubtedly, this thesis has a good practical significance.

# Theoretical background

### 3.1 The biblical story of Jonah complex

"Jonah complex" is a common psychological phenomenon of many people, and its term originated from the Bible. "Jonah" is the concept of pigeon in Christianity. Pigeon's job is to spread information, that is, missionaries and messengers. But in the Bible, Jonah was a prophet in 790-749 BC. He and other contemporary prophets were sent by God to preach the message of repentance to foreign people. Jonah is a devout Jewish prophet. He has always been eager to be reused by God. God finally gave him a glorious mission to announce the amnesty of Nineveh, a city that was to be destroyed by crime. But Jonah resisted the task. He ran away and kept avoiding the God he believed in. God's power searched for him everywhere, awakened him, punished him, and even let a big fish swallow him. In the end, after repeated hesitation, he finally repented and completed his mission to announce the amnesty of Nineveh. Jonah refers to those who are eager to grow but afraid of growing because of some internal obstacles. For Jonah, his unwillingness to fulfill God's will is probably due to hatred. Nineveh, the city where he wants to announce forgiveness, is the mortal enemy of his family. Jonah

complex tells us that people are not only afraid of failure, but also afraid of success[4].

### 3.2 Maslow's "Jonah complex" theory

# 3.2.1 People are very keen to maintain their self-esteem

Since self-esteem is so important, how can we improve our self-esteem? William James, founder of modern psychology and professor of psychology at Harvard University, said: self-esteem = success ÷ Ambition. It means: self-esteem depends not only on success itself, but also on your expectations of success[5]. Increasing success and reducing ambition, or reducing expectations of success, can lead to high self-esteem. It's not to give up completely, because most people have unrealistic expectations of their abilities. That is to say, people often think that they are higher than the average, but this is not the truth. For example, how well do you drive? Higher or lower than average? The answer is often: higher than average. Interestingly, almost everyone answers like that. However, it is impossible for everyone to be above average. Average means that there must be some people above the average and some people below it. It's not just the level of driving, we get similar answers when we ask other questions. For example, most people will say that their intelligence is higher than average; most people think they look better than average; most businessmen will say that they are more competitive than their competitors; most football players will say that their contribution is above the average in the team. Why does this happen? Why do we always have unrealistic expectations of our abilities? This is related to our self-protection mechanism for self-esteem. Most of the time, we take care of our self-esteem. On the one hand, we will actively pursue positive feedback; on the other hand, we will actively avoid negative feedback from others. In one experiment, psychologists selected two groups of college students. They told a group of college students that the more tolerant your hands are to biting ice water, the better your heart is. Another group of college students, however, were told by psychologists that the more your hands can't stand the cold of ice water, the better your heart is. The results showed that those who were told that the longer their hands were in ice water, the better their hearts were, the longer they kept their hands in ice water. Just to prove that they have a strong heart, these people do not hesitate to endure the piercing cold. It can be seen how enthusiastic people are about "proving that they are good."

### 3.2.2 Maslow's experiment on Jonah complex

Most of the time, we take it for granted that success is something everyone will take the initiative to pursue. But psychological research has found that this is not the case. Many people are actually afraid of success and will take the initiative to escape the great mission. It was Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, who found this phenomenon.

The concept of "Jonah complex" comes from his experiment in class. When Maslow taught his graduate students, he asked them the following question: "who in your class wants to write the greatest novel in America?" "Who aspires to be a saint?" "Who will be the great leader? " According to Maslow's record, his students usually respond to this situation by giggling, blushing and squirming restlessly. Maslow asked, "are you quietly planning to write a great book on psychology?" They usually blush and stammer. Maslow also asked, "aren't you going to be a psychologist?" Someone replied, "of course." "Do you want to be a silent, cautious psychologist?" Maslow said. "What's the advantage of that? That's not an ideal path to self-fulfillment."

#### 4. Research methods

Through a large number of searching, consulting,

sorting out the network, newspapers, books, academic journals, academic reports, this paper studies a large number of Maslow's materials about "Jonah complex", and sorts out, summarizes and refines these materials. At the same time, combined with the views of many authoritative institutions, experts and scholars, it draws the conclusion of this paper.

# 5. The reasons for the formation of Jonah complex are as follows

The sense of low value "self-destruction complex" caused by the parenting style of the original family

# 5.1.1 The sense of low value caused by the original family

Many people have low self-evaluation. In other words, they have low sense of value and unstable self-identity, which is closely related to the parenting style of their native family. If a person's words and deeds in his childhood are rarely recognized and encouraged by his parents, but are criticized, suppressed or even abused by his parents, he will have deep self-doubt, lack confidence and courage in the face of anything, full of negative emotions, and there will always be a voice in his heart: I can't do better, I don't deserve better things. This kind of people's potential identity is a humble person, although when they are in an ordinary position, on the one hand, they are full of resentment and discontent, and resentful for their failure position, but on the other hand, when success really comes, they feel that they are not worthy of it, and sometimes they even destroy it, It's the same reason that distrust of intimacy can subconsciously destroy a healthy relationship. This is what Freud called forced repetition, the fate of repeated failure[6]. Therefore, the improper upbringing of the original family is an important factor in the formation of Jonah complex.

### 5,1,2 Original family and self-destruction

#### complex

"Self-destruction complex" is an important factor that causes "Jonah complex" and hinders personal growth and success. The reason of self-destruction complex is the improper parenting style of parents and there is a deep resentment against their parents. In order to subconsciously revenge on their parents, they subconsciously destroy their own future. Their potential wish is: "my parents must not get a successful child and I just want to let them down and suffer!" The most extreme desire to revenge on parents by destroying oneself is suicide. A person's physical health and achievements in life are the best rewards to his parents. However, because of the latent resentment in his childhood, some people never want to repay their parents. On the contrary, they will subconsciously destroy themselves to indirectly revenge their parents, whether it is physical health or external success. There is no doubt that people with self-destruction complex will consciously or unconsciously refuse to be better themselves.

# 5.2 Herd mentality -- the fear of being seen and envied

#### 5.2.1 The origin of herd mentality

Herd mentality is a very common collective psychological phenomenon in human society. No matter what era or nation, it is deeply engraved in human collective unconsciousness. From the perspective of human evolution, herd mentality has a very far-reaching source. Different from today's society, in the primitive times, the ancestors of human beings faced the harsh natural environment and difficult living environment, so it was an inevitable choice to live in groups. When a group needs to make a choice between going up the mountain or going down the sea, what people should do is not to consider which of the two choices is more reasonable, but what kind of choices

most people make and follow the collective actions of most people. The reason is very clear, in that dangerous environment, if not united, there will be a dead end. Nowadays, with the development of society and the improvement of living environment, the psychology of "following the crowd" is still deeply imprinted in the collective unconsciousness of human beings. People often feel uneasy and afraid of "being different from the group".

# 5.2.2 The fear of being seen and envied caused by herd mentality

Maybe we simply think that it's exciting to be successful and get the attention of others. However, not everyone can face the attention, discussion and even malicious jealousy and attack of others comfortably and calmly. This also stems from the herd mentality in human heart: you may worry that success will cause the jealousy of friends or relatives; you may worry that after success, you will experience a lot of embarrassment when exposed to the spotlight; you may also worry that the higher you climb, the worse you fall; you may also worry that success is just a flash in the pan and glory is fleeting. Maslow said, "if you always try to cover up your own glory, then your future will be dark."[7]. Success means "being seen", because people always focus on those who succeed, and few people pay attention to the unknown. But must it be good to be seen? Not always. In full view of the public, a person will feel both pleasant and uncomfortable. There will be a sense of pride as well as the embarrassment of being exposed to the public. For some people with unstable self-esteem, the feelings of embarrassment, disgrace and shame when they are concerned are so tormenting that they have to find ways to avoid experiencing these feelings. Some people are afraid of success, not because they don't want to succeed, but because they are afraid of the negative emotion with shame as the core when they are noticed after success. In addition, success arouses others' jealousy, but it is not easy to bear this. Successful people are praised and admired by others, but at the same time, they also have to bear the attack of jealousy. Jealousy is a destructive emotion. Envious people always want to destroy the good things that others have, because they have a hidden desire to destroy the successful people. When hearing the adverse news of a competitor, people will inevitably feel happy, which is also caused by jealousy. At the same time, a person with strong jealousy not only yearns for success, but also is particularly afraid of success, because they will project their jealousy on others, thinking that others will destroy their success like what he does. Therefore, once they succeed, they will experience a very uneasy state.

### 5.3 Oedipus conflict

Another important reason for the formation of Jonah complex is the Oedipus conflict. Some men in the Oedipus complex are both eager to defeat their father and afraid to defeat him at the same time, because defeating their fathers will arouse a strong sense of guilt, as well as the fear of revenge by their fathers[8]. Success symbolically represents the fulfillment of Oedipus' desire, that is, the fulfillment of incest desire and patricide desire, which will certainly arouse the fear of being punished and the feelings of guilt. These people avoid success, in order to avoid experiencing the painful emotion of Oedipus conflict. These people are often particularly nervous in competitive situations. There are two reasons: in consciousness, they are afraid that they are not doing well, which is the realistic reason. In subconscious, they are afraid that they are doing too well, which is the neurotic reason, because the latter symbolically means defeating their fathers, which will arouse the conflict of Oedipus. They are afraid of the psychological conflict of not doing well and being afraid of doing well, and the psychological conflict of longing for success and being afraid of success, which makes them too nervous in the face of competition. Therefore, these people sometimes succeed

and sometimes fail. In this way, they not only satisfy their desire to defeat their father, but also achieve reconciliation with their father. Another example is that a person who has achieved certain success through his efforts begins to suffer from insomnia, anxiety, physical discomfort and compulsion. This is because the sense of success arouses his Oedipus conflict, and he has to compromise in the way of neurosis.

### 5.4 the restraint of "comfort zone"

Another important reason that Jonah complex can control us is that it is difficult for human beings to get out of the psychological comfort zone, because the psychological comfort zone is the most familiar, most commonly used and most used way to deal with the environment and problems, and it can bring us a strong sense of control. From the psychological point of view, the sense of control is also an important psychological demand of human beings, which is the source of human security and an important way to deal with anxiety. The more people are facing threats and anxiety, the more they need to have a sense of control, the harder they can get out of the comfort zone, because they will seize their original environment and coping style and will not let go. On the contrary, going out of comfort zone means dealing with anxiety and insecurity in a new and uncertain way, which is very difficult for human emotion to accept. When people face life, environment, work and people around them, they already have their own familiar coping system and form a comfortable area, they will refuse to come out and refuse to change. Undoubtedly, this is one of the important reasons why "Jonah complex" can firmly bind a person.

# 6. How to overcome "Jonah complex"

How can we overcome the obstacle of Jonah complex and develop our potential? Maslow did not give a clear and in-depth answer to this question. The difference between shrinking individuals and unrestrained individuals is simply the difference between fear and courage. It may be a very complicated psychological, cultural and social problem to overcome Jonah complex, but there is no doubt that what we can do is not to be ignorant, to understand our psychological situation clearly, to face conflicts and contradictions bravely, and to believe that we can do better than we are now.

To overcome the influence of Jonah complex, we must first make a series of psychological corrections

# 6.1 Try to reconcile with the original family

Without a perfect native family, parents will inevitably have various deficiencies in the process of raising their children. First of all, we need to recognize the defects of our parents' character and personality, and what problems our parents have in the process of raising us. We need to know clearly that even if we are often criticized by our parents, it does not mean that we are of low value. For example, when children face narcissistic parents, they will inevitably be suppressed and ridiculed by narcissistic parents, because people with narcissistic personality only focus on themselves and try to be the spotlight in the crowd all their lives. They are extremely keen to maintain their imaginary "perfect self", but never developed a truly independent self[9]. When their self-esteem is threatened and they feel humiliated, they will get angry and project their sense of shame and anger on others. The same is true for narcissistic parents, who often project their negative emotions on their children. When they criticize their children's shortcomings, they will get "narcissistic supply" to make up for their inner discomfort. When we are faced with the criticism and pressure from our parents, we need to distinguish whether their criticism is objective and well intentioned or just their inner yearning projection. If it is the latter, we don't have to

feel depressed about it, let alone, because the problem is not our own but theirs. Many people resent their parents all their lives, but it's unnecessary. If we don't have the ideal image of parents as we imagine, we'd like to express our regret and sorrow for it! We don't need to live in the shadow of our parents, because it's not our fault.

## 6.2 Get rid of the curse of "herd mentality"

French sociologist Gustav Le Pen said: "the intelligence of people in the group is close to that of infants. People only have emotions that are easily incited and lack of rational thinking." [10] First of all, we need to have a clear understanding of the "herd mentality" and the characteristics of the herd. We need to know that successful people and outstanding people are different. They are good at independent thinking and are good at acting against the public, so they can make outstanding achievements. Therefore, we should not think that not following the public is a "sin". On the contrary, it is often because such people have unique thinking and opinions. Secondly, don't be panic in the face of other people's jealousy and attack. We should know that this is the price that must be paid for success and being different. The "people who are different" are doomed to be criticized or even excluded by the "group". We should learn to accept and face this fact calmly. As long as we stick to the right direction, we should go on fearlessly[11].

#### 6.3 Overcoming the "Oedipus conflict"

In the last chapter of this paper, we have made a detailed analysis of the mechanism of "Oedipus conflict". First of all, we should carefully observe whether our way of thinking and behavior are in line with the mode of "Oedipus conflict", so as to better understand our own problems. When we find that we do have this problem, we should consciously remind ourselves in our daily work and life, and remind ourselves that "don't feel uneasy about good grades. We are excellent and worth it." After a period of conscious training, people with "Oedipus conflict" can abandon the old way of thinking and behavior, establish a new mode of thinking and behavior, and then ease the "Jonah complex" and reduce the resistance of their own life path.

### 6.4 Go out of the "comfort zone"

The ability to walk out of the comfort zone and dare to take risks and challenges is the main way for us to grow up the only way to overcome the "Jonah complex". However, people often dare not take the first step. In fact, the core of the comfort zone is not really about comfort, it's mainly about fear. Breaking fear is the way out of comfort zone. Once we do, we can learn to enjoy the adventure and grow in it. There's a way to get out of your comfort zone: be aware of what's outside your comfort zone. What are the things you think are worth doing, but don't dare to do for fear of failure? Draw a circle and write down the things you think are worth doing but don't dare to do. Write down the things that make you feel comfortable inside the circle [12]. By doing so, you can not only clearly identify what is outside your comfort zone, but also know what is inside your comfort zone; figure out what you want to overcome. Make a list of things that make you uncomfortable, and then go deeper. Remember, the main emotion you want to overcome is fear. How does this fear manifest itself in every situation? To be very specific in description; learn to get used to what makes you uncomfortable. One way to get out of your comfort zone is to expand your comfort zone. You can set a goal that don't run away from what makes you uncomfortable; think of failure as a teacher. Many people are so afraid of failure that we would rather do nothing than try again for our dream. We should be good at summing up experience and lessons from the experience of failure, and improve the probability of success; if you want to get out of the comfort zone, you

need to take it step by step. Don't think that we can jump out of the comfort zone at once, which will only make us feel at a loss and escape back to our comfort zone again. Instead, we need to overcome our fear step by step; focus on the fun itself. We should learn to enjoy the process of walking out of the comfort zone, focus on the things in front of us, don't worry about the gains and losses, and enjoy the fun of discovering the things about ourselves that have been ignored by us.

In view of "Jonah complex", first of all, everyone must clearly understand their own inner situation and boldly admit the existence of "Jonah complex". In the face of responsibility and pressure, we should overcome fear, summon up courage, firm confidence, and believe in ourselves. No matter what difficulties and setbacks we encounter, we should not lose courage and confidence; secondly, we should overcome the fear in the process of growth, and at the same time, we should see our own shortcomings. Growth and success are a gradual process. As long as each of us has done our best to give full play to our potential; thirdly, we should have the confidence to recommend ourselves. Instead of waiting for others to find us, we should try our best to show our talents[13].

## Conclusion

"Jonah complex" leads people not to do what they can do well, even to avoid exploring their potential. In daily life, this kind of behavior is manifested as lack of self-improvement. Everyone hopes to achieve self-realization in life and work, that is, the desire for growth, the impulse to improve themselves and realize themselves, and the desire to develop their potential. But in fact, most people feel that they have not realized themselves, that they have not brought their potential into full play and that they have not realized their inner desires. There is a psychological mechanism of "health unconsciousness" -- people not only suppress their dangerous, terrible and detestable impulses, but also often suppress their beautiful and noble impulses[14]. Due to the influence of the surrounding environment, our behavior will hide our real personality and cater to the popular views and behavior in the society. However, people's nature has the inner impulse to pursue growth, aspire to success and self-realization. Under this impulse, people strive for their own goals or ideals, and they all hope to show their excellent side and get recognition, but the long-term life practice tells us that the publicity of personality and high-profile actions are unpopular and will be attacked, so most people always put on the coat of modesty like chameleons, thus restraining themselves from pursuing self-realization. On the contrary, successful people are different because they don't choose to compromise with the powerful and ubiquitous social forces under the conflict between internal nature and external environment. They didn't become docile, obedient, modest, lack of questioning and enterprising spirit. They resolve conflicts in their own way and stick to their pursuit and dream. Only in this way can they succeed and become outstanding people. "Jonah complex" tells us that success comes from overcoming the obstacles of inner growth. On the way forward in life, in addition to ourselves, who can beat us?

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### 贾富兰(Jia Fulan)



- · 2021년 4월~현재: 국제심리상담연구소
- · 2020년 4월~현재 : 대한신학대학원 대학교 상담심리치료학
- · 관심분야: practical application of psychology
- · E-Mail: Victoria\_yanyan@sina.com

#### 백 형 기 (Baek, Hyung Ki)



- · 2021년 4월~현재 : 심리상담복지학회
- ·2020년 2월 : 중국 베이징 UIBE 국제무역 박사 졸업
- · 관심분야: 상담심리, 아동·청소년, 국제무역
- · E-Mail: princenim07@naver.com