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PSYCHOTHERAPY OF COSMIC HARMONY (A THERAPEUTIC APPROACH
INSPIRED BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE) AND ITS EFFECT
ON DEPRESSIVE OUTPATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

Psychotherapy of Cosmic Harmony is a therapeutic theory gleaned from the writings of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). It sees the entire cosmos as a Harmony with the Eternal as its pulsating center. Man, not only is in harmony with the universe but also a harmony in himself. Harmony is health. Disharmony is ill health.

After presenting these theoretical constructs, this study investigated its therapeutic effectiveness. The treatment modality has been designed by the researcher taking inspiration from the methods used by Tagore and is named "Creative Visualization" techniques. The specific questions this study sought to answer are:

1. Will there be a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the experimental and control groups of counselees on depression and personality growth as measured by Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Inventory of Self Actualization Characteristics (ISAC)?

2. Will the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups of counselees show a significant difference on BDI and ISAC scales?



3. Will the gain scores of the experimental and control groups manifest a significant difference on BDI and ISAC measures?

4. Will there be significant changes among the counselees of the experimental group in a manner perceived by them and some of the significant others as a result of the intervention on the following variables: client expectations, physiological symptoms, psycho-spiritual states, thought, behavior and relationship patterns as measured by the feedback measures?

This study is nomothetic in nature with the group as the unit of study without prejudicing the intra-individual and inter-individual variations. These variations are seen in the larger setting of the group.

The subjects of this study were drawn from the psychiatric out-patient department of Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila. The 60 subjects were chosen from among those who were diagnosed by the attending psychiatrist as neurotic depressives and with a cut-off score of 15 and above on Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). These subjects were randomly divided into control (30) and experimental (30) groups on the basis of their availability or non-availability to



participate in the ten-day experimental program. The subjects came from the middle class and lower middle class population with a mean age of 26.81. Their educational level ranged from high school drop-out to a college degree equal to A.B.

The therapeutic intervention called "Creative Visualization" consisted of deep relaxation reaching to the alpha state of awareness. Then the desired creative imageries were projected on to the mental screen of the counselee with the belief that these creative images in the alpha state will effect positive changes in the clients. Drawing psychic and cosmic energies, these changes were affirmed and strengthened. The group interaction gave the needed clarification and support to the individual. The therapeutic intervention was for ten consecutive days with a three-hour session each day. A standard format was used for the intervention though departure and additions had been made to meet the needs of the groups but always within the generic modality of the Psychotherapy of Cosmic Harmony.

The primary outcome variables of this study are depression and self-actualization measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Inventory of Self Actualization Characteristics (ISAC). The secondary



variables are client expectations, physiological symptoms, psycho-spiritual states, patterns of thought, behavior and relationships, which are measured by the feedback measures of Counselee Personal Evaluation (CPE) and Significant Other Evaluation (SOE).

The results of the study indicated that the experimental counselees made a significant improvement compared to the control group of counselees both on depression and self-actualization. The feedback measures collaborated with the statistical results meaning that the post-therapy results of the experimental group were significantly higher than the pre-therapy result on client expectations, physiological symptoms, psycho-spiritual states, patterns of thought, behavior and relationships.

A follow-up study after two months made on 14 experimental counselees showed that four maintained the gains, seven showed moderate increase in depression and decrease in self-actualization, while three have gone back almost to the original state. Another two who were not included in the follow-up study deteriorated so badly that one was admitted in the mental hospital due to his deep depression and attempted suicide, while the other was in the rehabilitation center of the Dangerous Drugs



Board due to his intake of drugs.

Based on the results, the following conclusions were made:

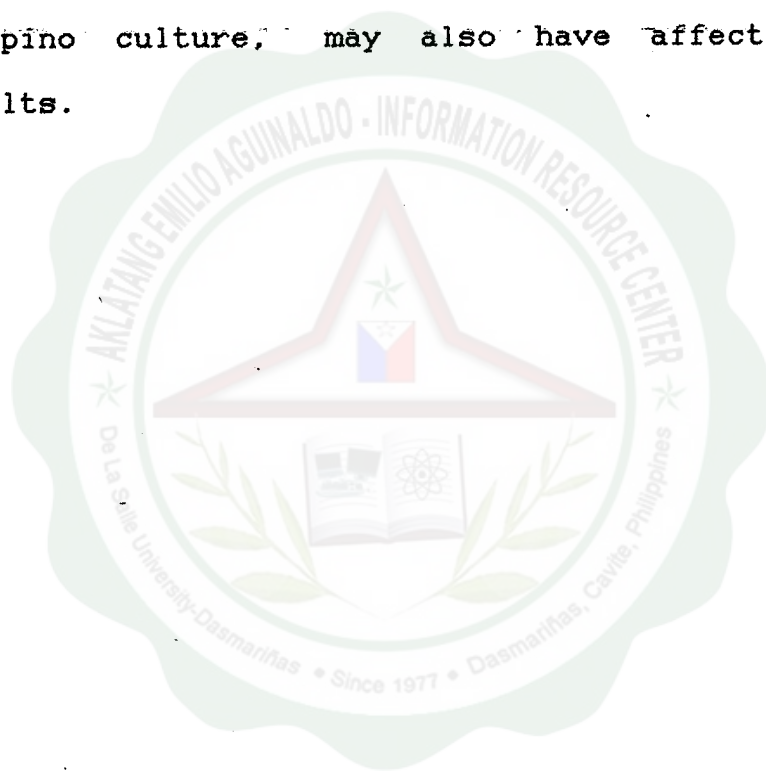
1. The Tagorean personality theory and treatment formulated and experimented in this study, with all its limitations, is an important Oriental personality theory for understanding the troublesome functioning of the counselees, for remedying psycho-spiritual disorders and for bringing the counselees back to the path of personality realization.
2. The Creative Visualization technique of relaxation, visualization and affirmation in a group setting is a powerful instrument in reducing depression and enhancing personality well-being and growth.
3. The Cosmic Harmony therapeutic treatment is an effective tool in reducing the inner felt pain of the counselees by changing the pain-inducing negative physiological symptoms, psycho-spiritual states, patterns of thought, behavior and relationship into a positive world of personality growth.



4. The Cosmic Harmony therapeutic theory is transpersonal in nature. As such, the harnessing of psychic, cosmic and Divine energies are available to the counselees through the process of creative visualization which is very powerful in bringing personality transformation.
5. The Cosmic Harmony treatment, through the process of creative visualization in a deep meditative or alpha state of mind, is capable of replacing negative images that shaped the counselee's life into the positive images that would reduce depression and enhance personality well-being.
6. The short duration of ten days of creative visualization therapy is not sufficient in producing a very significant reduction in depression and improvement in personality growth.
7. The delivery of the treatment in English and the researcher's inability to be conversant in Tagalog may have reduced the effectiveness of the treatment.
8. The psychiatric drug treatment during the experiment may also have reduced the effectiveness of the treatment.



9. The continuation of the psychiatric treatment during the experiment made it very difficult to measure accurately the result of the psychotherapeutic treatment.
10. The Cosmic Harmony theory and treatment which is of Indian cultural inspiration, given to clients of Filipino culture, may also have affected the results.



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When I was in the labyrinthine ways of my life, Rabindranath Tagore, my guru and guide, came to my rescue and brought me out of its dark alleys, to the feet of the Lord, whom my heart was searching for:

" . . . to worship him with folded hands
placing at his feet the treasure of my heart"
Gitanjali, Tagore, 1910

This dissertation Psychotherapy of Cosmic Harmony and its Effect on Depressive Outpatients is a humble homage to my guru and guide Rabindranath Tagore.

Besides this research study is also a tribute to my alma mater De La Salle University and its Department of Guidance & Counseling with its professors, who opened my being to the inner psychological dimensions of life: Dr. Salud Evangelista, the chairperson, Dr. Rose Salazar, Dr. Mel Deauna, Dr. Keiter, Dr. Dushy Singh and others, above all to Dr. Imelda Villar who stood by me and guided me with great versatility and patience. It is also a loving tribute to my friends, especially Dr. Soledad Balein, the psychiatrist of Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital, Sta. Cruz, Manila, a true, committed friend and co-therapist who all through the treatment - from selecting subjects from her patients, to introducing the treatment



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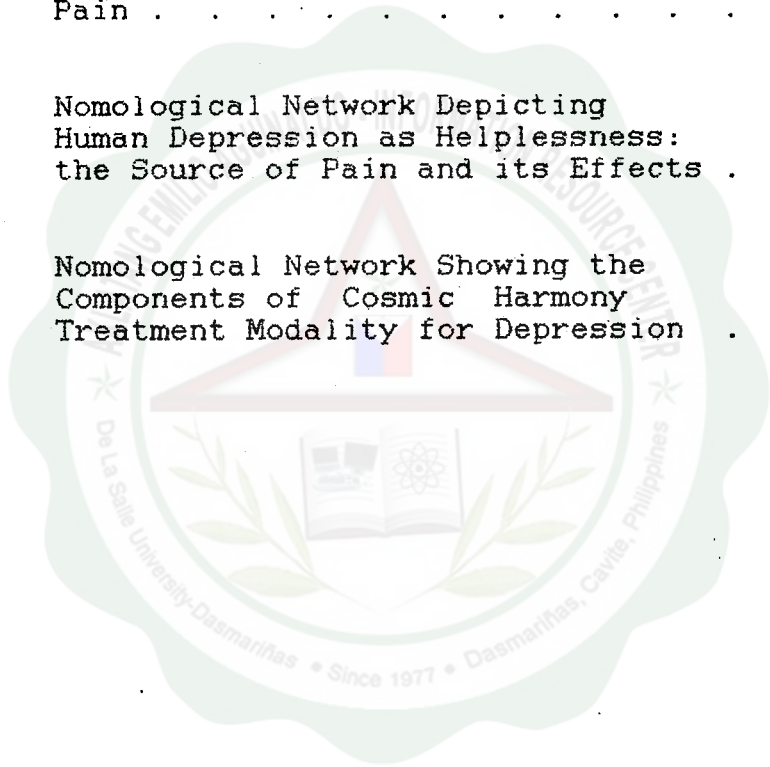
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