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The Effects of a New Program (balance & reform) On Trait Anxiety and Self- esteem: a Pilot Study

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Abstract

Balance and Reform is a program that exercise the body, soul and mind is introduced. The program has four parts in every meeting: Pilates and yoga exercises, self-awareness techniques, drama and movement exercises and a visualizing. The purpose of the study is to search if this program has any effect on self-esteem and trait anxiety. A sample of 20 young women attended the program for one month. The STAI questionnaire for trait anxiety and the Rosenberg's questionnaire for self-esteem were used. The results showed that the levels of trait anxiety were statistically significant decreased ($t_{(19)} = 4.621$, $p < 0.005$, $M1 = 46.8$, $M2 = 35.40$) and the levels of self-esteem were statistically significant increased ($t_{(19)} = 3.805$, $p < 0.05$, $M1 = 3.18$, $M2 = 3.58$). This study showed that the BR program had a good effect on anxiety and self-esteem. This was a pilot study. There should be more study on the effects of this program.

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1. Introduction

The economical crisis and the new lifestyle have negatively affected the psychology of the population in Greece (<http://www.3comma14.gr/pi/?survey=12145>). According to same survey one to three citizens suffers from anxiety. There is a need of more interventions – programs that affect physical and psychological well-being, to be introduced in the society. Some of the techniques or programs that already exist focus only on mind (self-awareness and consulting) or body (pilates and yoga) or soul (meditation). There are studies that showed good results of these techniques - programs on decreasing of anxiety and increasing of other factors of self-concept, such as self-esteem, self- confidence, and self- efficacy (Kirkwood, Rampes, Tuffrey, Richardson and Pilkington, 2005; Rodrigues, Cader, Torres, Oliveira and Dantas, 2010; Cusumano and Robinson, 1993; Berger and Owen, 1988; Cruz- Ferreira, Fernandes, Gomes, Bernardo, Kirkcaldy, Barbosa and Silva, 2011; Geller and Shaver, 1976). All of these techniques – programs refer to one or two parts of the self and not in the whole person, as a unit, who consists of mind, body and soul. The program Balance and Reform (BR) that is introduced in this study combines all these three parts of the self and “treats” the person as a whole unit (body, soul and mind).

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of this new program (BR) on trait anxiety and self-esteem in a small sample.

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2. Methodology

For this purpose a sample of 20 young women (age 19 -30 years old, $M = 22$, $SD = 3.47$) attended the Balance & Reform program for one month (4 hours / week) in two groups of 10 people each. The trait anxiety was measured by using the Greek version of STAI questionnaire (Spielberger, 1972; Liakos & Gianitsis, 1984). Particularly, only the 20 questions for trait anxiety were used, in 4-point Likert scale. The reliability of the scale (Cronbach alpha coefficient) was found equal to .919. In order to measure the self-esteem the Greek version of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale was used (Rosenberg, 1965, Makri – Botsari, 2001). Each of the ten items in this instrument was intended to measure global self-esteem in the sense described by Rosenberg (1979). The items were scored on a 4-point Likert scale. The reliability of the scale (Cronbach alpha coefficient) was found equal to .834. Moreover, open- ended questions were used in order to examine what participants think they have gained from the program and if they want to continue the program and why. Data were analyzed with paired-sample T-test.

The questionnaires were given to the participants before and after the program. The program was consisted from 4 parts in each meeting. In the first part, exercises, that are inspired from yoga and pilates, were done. In this part the body and mind were prepared for the following sessions. This is the part that people were concentrated to the program and to their selves. In the second part, there were some self- awareness techniques, where participants had to analyse and think about themselves and there were discussions for different aspects of self-awareness (for example their personality, their different aspects of their behaviour). In this part of the meeting the conscious mind was activated in order to “explore” their selves and to identify aspects of their selves that they don't like and want to change. The third part was consisted with drama and movement improvisation. In this part the participants were free to express themselves and to develop their creativity through the “art”. All activities had to do with the theme that has been discussed at each meeting. Finally, in the last part a visualizing referring to the theme of the meeting was occurred. This part had to do with the activation of the unconscious mind.

3. Results

A paired-sample t-test was conducted for each variable. The results showed that there was a statistically significant decreased in the scores of the trait anxiety ($t_{(19)} = 4.621$, $p < 0.005$, $M1 = 46.8$, $M2 = 35.40$) (table 1.2). There was also a statistically significant increase in the scores of self-esteem ($t_{(19)} = - 3.805$, $p < 0.005$, $M1 = 3.18$, $M2 = 3.58$) (table 2). In the table 1 the descriptive statistics are presented.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Stai	20	30.00	74.00	46.8000	11.81257
selfesteem	20	1.70	3.70	3.1800	.56531
postSTAI	20	29.00	45.00	35.4000	5.71609
postSELFESTEEM	20	3.20	3.90	3.5800	.20926
Valid N (listwise)	20				

Moreover the results from open-ended questions showed that participants felt an increase in their self-esteem, self- confidence, knowing themselves better and starting feeling less stress in their everyday life. Some of the phrases that they have answered are: “I gain power and courage” (M), “I learn myself better” (S), “I gain more self-confidence and I learn some new things that I could not have been imagine them” (Z), “I started learning how to

love myself” (I) “I have clearer targets, better self-confidence and less stress” (S), “ I learn to pay attention what happens around me” (G), “It gave me techniques to deal with myself and with the others. I learn to separate what is good for me, without worrying for the results” (K).

Table 2 Paired sample t-test for trait anxiety and self-esteem

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			n		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	stai - postSTAI	11.40000	11.03296	2.46705	6.23641	16.56359	4.621	19	.000 ^a
Pair 2	sesteem – postSELFESTEEM	-.40000	.47016	.10513	-.62004	-.17996	-3.805	19	.001 ^b

a. statistical significant in $p=0.001$

b. statistical singificant in $p=0.001$

4. Discussion

This pilot study showed that the attending of Balance and Reform program for one month can increase the self-esteem and decrease the state anxiety of participants. The research hypothesis was verified. Balance and Reform is a program that combines many types of techniques that influence stress and self-esteem, such as yoga, pilates, self-awareness techniques, drama improvisation, movement improvisation and visualization (Cusumano, & Robinson, 1992; Rodrigues, et.al, 2010; Kirkwood et.al, 2005). BR is a program that treats the individual as a whole unit (body, mind and soul). It is a complete (holistic) program.

Although this study showed some encouraging results, there should be considered that it is a pilot one. The sample was small and the duration was limited. The results cannot be generalized but there are positive trends for the effectiveness of BR program on self-esteem and trait anxiety. There should be more research, in the effectiveness of BR on more psychological variables and on other populations with bigger samples and greater duration of the intervention.

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