The Effects of Cinematherapy: Anxiety Diminution, Self-Esteem Development

Asst. Prof. Sorina Daniela Dumitrache	Prof.Laurentiu Mitrofan
PhD, University of Bucharest, Department of Social Work, SchituMăgureanu, no. 9, Bucharest, Romania	PhD, Universisty of Bucharest, Department of Psychology, Panduri, no. 90, Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT *Cinematherapy promotes a healthy and harmonious development, it is a catalyst for creative manifestation and it ensures wellness, as well as inner and external balance. The general assumption we started from in carrying out this paper is that the cinematherapy method is a determinant factor in young people's psychological optimization, which materializes in the increasing of self-esteem level and in the diminution of anxiety level. Methods used: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Cinematherapy-Centered personal development program.Our research hypothesis, according to which, there are statistically significant differences regarding the anxiety parameter and the self-esteem parameter, as an effect of applying a cinematherapy-centered experiential personal development program, is confirmed. Cinematherapyhelps participants to discover new healthy coping mechanisms in order to better integrate in all the contexts of their life.*

INTRODUCTION

The cinematherapyrepresents an original work method which insures the stimulation and the support of the beneficiaries' personal, casual, familial, interpersonal and socio-professional reality perceptiveness processes, their adaptability and openness to novelty, to experience, their becoming aware of and harmonious with their own self and with the world, their creative and healthy accommodation to reality, in order to experiment a state of well-being at an individual and collective level (Dumitrache, S.D., 2014c).

The unifying-experiential cinematherapy (E.U.CT.) represents an original work methoddeveloped by Dumitrache, S.D. (2014c) which implies using the motion picture as a frame for personal development, personal and interpersonal maturing, for individual, family and group counselling and psychotherapy, taking place in a well defined therapeutic setting, in a relaxed and unstrained atmosphere, in which the participant or the participants (depending on the case) are invited and guided to watch the movie in an intensified state of consciousness, continuously being connected to and aware of their experiences and their inwardness as generated by movie-watching, following a specialist's guidance, namely, a psychological counselor or psychotherapist. Since it is an attractive technique, the cinematherapy insures at the same time the depth of a transformation and of a significant personal and relational development (Dumitrache, S.D., 2014c).

This personal development method has strong therapeutical valences awaking a series of emotions and psychological states contained in the individual's psyche, but oftentimes not cognizable. In other words, the movie, used a therapeutic pretext, challenges the subject to feel, become aware of, face their own inwardness. In a stage following the movie playing, the experiential-unifying analysis preceded by various techniques meant to focus the subject's attention to himself/herself, will build up the optimizing-therapeutic process aiming at a self-harmonizing, and also at achieving some harmony with the surrounding social environment (Dumitrache, S.D., 2015).

Considering the multitude of stimuli that the modern society brings into the human psyche, the anxiety issue be-

comes a sine qua non variable of any human optimizing effort. Presenting the cinematographic sequences integrates above all, the revealing of new, diverse and alternative ways to face the environmental psychological reality. We find it necessary to point out that the movie viewing in itself does not automatically generate a diminution of the participants' anxiety, quite the contrary, in some cases, the participants' anxiety is evoked, brought to surface and even magnified during and after the movie watching. Yet, what is specific about the experiential-unifying cinematherapy is the fact that this anxiety is approached in a provocative fashion and it is accompanied by the trainer's all-important and curative guidance, thus, becoming real, flexible and easily transforming for the participant. So, the subject may be able to reduce his/her anxiety level, both as a result of the fact that he/she identifies within the movie characters positive models to deal with it (i.e. anxiety) or with the stress generating life situations, which gives the beneficiary the opportunity to consider multiple reality facets, and especially, through therapeutic effort, during which there may take place some re-signification of the personal universe, through identification, cognizance, restructuring and positive inner transformation.

In a society which is in a perpetual and accelerated transformation, the individual needs to redefine himself/herself in regard to the surrounding world and the external demands, which many times test his/her limits and resources. In this frame, the self-esteem plays a fundamental role, by supporting the individual in his/her flexible adaptation process to the socio-cultural context, without running the risk to lose his/her personal identity sense or to alienate. Considering the social implications and the special importance of the self-esteem in the individual's life, cinematherapy used in experiential-unifying fashion gives the individual the possibility to calibrate the self-esteem, so that he/she can handle the socially desirable models, the high academic and professional performance standards. By participating in such a program, one insures the adequate individual's functioning by confronting him/her with multiple attitudes, values and representations, which, after having been analysed and compared, would be introjected or accounted for as stimuli in individual's drawing up his/her own axiologic and value sets.

Some researches show the effects of the cinematherapy, with positive results, correlated with the diminishing of the anxiety level (Biermanşi Krieger, 2003 in Fredricks, A., 2011; Dumitrache, S.D., 2014b), with the self-esteem melioration (Le Powell, M., Newgent, R.A., Min Lee, S., 2006; Jurich and Collins, 1996 apudFredricks, A., 2011).

OBJECTIVE
The main the main objective of this paper is the behavior optimization and enhancing the self-esteem associated with lowering the anxiety level among the participants of a cinematherapy personal development program.

HYPOTHESES
The work hypotheses considered for investigation that make up the studies presented in this paper are the following:

1. There are statistically significant differences regarding the anxiety parameter, pursuant to implementing a unifying-experiential, cinematherapy-centered personal development program.
2. There are statistically significant differences regarding the self-esteem parameter, pursuant to implementing a unifying-experiential, cinematherapy-centered personal development program.

METHOD
RESEARCH VARIABLES
The independent variable: young persons' participation/nonparticipation in a cinematherapy-centered personal development program.

Effect variable quantified in the frame of our study: anxiety, self-esteem.

PARTICIPANTS
We included 120 subjects in the study, students of social and human studies faculties (Educational Sciences and Psychology Faculty, the Psychology department, Sociology and Social Assistance Faculty, Social Assistance department) distributed in the following way: an experimental group made up of 60 subjects (aged 18 to 23, 51 subjects were females and 9 subjects were males) who were included in the cinematherapy-centered personal development program and a control group made up of 60 subjects (18 to 23, 53 females and 7 males) who did not benefit from any type of training, who only participated in their daily academic activities.

INSTRUMENTS
In order to test the above mentioned hypotheses, the following testing procedures were used:

• The State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)
The inventory consists of two self-report scales measuring two distinct concepts regarding anxiety: anxiety (A-status) and trait anxiety (A-trait).

The State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) consists of two 20-item self-report measures. The two scales consist of 20 items each on which subjects can express their general condition (Scala A-trait), how they feel at a time (Scala A-status).

The reliability of The State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) indicated excellent internal consistency (average s .89), and the STAI Trait had evidenced excellent test–retest reliability (average r .88) at multiple time intervals (Barnes, Harp, &

Jung, 2002).

• The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale consits of 10 items in a 4-point Lickert scale measuring global self-worth through positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale has 0.80 reliability and 0.64 construct validity.

THE PROCEDURE
The experimental group subjects were divided in 6 groups, each group made up of 10 persons. The entire experiment spanned over a period of 3 years, the 6 sessions each took 3 months. Each group benefited from 12 meetings, the first and the last being exclusively dedicated to testing (pretest and post-test). The experiential-unifying cinematherapy program ran over 10 sessions, each of them lasting 4 hours, one meeting per week.

The experiment started with the participants' invitation to the established locations in order to participate in the program. After laying out the objectives, the benefits and implications of their participation in the program, the participants were communicated the meeting schedule and the work frame, and their agreement on the participation and their group rules observing was obtained. The program was organized in 4 procedural stages, which sum up 10 sessions that will be described at large below.

Regarding the control group, there was no experiential-unifyingcinematherapy-centered personal development program intervention. They were only tested with the same instruments at the beginning of the experiment and after three months.

THE EXPERIENTIAL-UNIFYING CINEMATHERAPY-CENTERED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
The experiential-unifying cinematherapy program implies getting through 4 stages.

In the first stage the participants interact with each other in order to establish a positive connection within the group. In this phase the most important things are: creating group cohesion, and developing a secure emotional environment.

Duringthe second stage, the subjects should be able to identify, analyze and decrypt the personal symbolic dynamics and their aggressive impulses, anxiety, fears and self-esteem related problems, brought to surface by the movie-watching with the help of self-exploration and therapeutic attendance.

In the third stage, the participants experience a diminution of the anxiety tendencies, an increasing level of the self-esteem, and a mental restructuration of the most important events of their lives and of their survival strategies and they are encouraged to implement the effects of the cinematherapeutic experience in their life scenario.

During thefourth stage, the participants will discover new healthy coping mechanisms in order to better integrate in their family and socio-professional contexts of life. They will be able to develop contact skills and efficient communication strategies as well as healthy relationship with the persons they interact with.

Being a cinematherapygroup experience, the subjects were seated on chairs, in semi-circle, each of them having confortable visual access to the movie projection.

Each session started with a guidance from the therapist, which took the form of a creative meditation in order to focus the participants' attention on their own inwardness and to prepare them for viewing the movie. The participants were invited to watch the movie in a deeply conscious state of mindwhich triggers thoughts or blocked emotions. The movie has the function of a therapeutic "instrument", a tool that enables the participants to access their own emotional motivational and even axiological contents. At the end of the movie, thetherapist conducted another creative meditation guidance customized in accord with each cinematographic theme and each symbolic content. At the end of each session participants will become part of the analysis and personal development process,being encouraged by the psychotherapistand by the group dynamics to come up with creative solutions to various dilemma, existential and socio-relational issues that seemed unsolvable.

In this cinematherapy program ten movies were played. The main selection criteriaof the movies gatheredexistential and relational problematic areas and the movie themes provide the participants a beneficial ground for reflection, identification, differentiation, self-discovery, self-awareness and personal development.

The movies' themesincluded: family and childhood universe; relationship with the self (personal development themes, self knowledge, spiritual endeavor, natural/artificial balance, fiction, existential bearing and death issues);family and couple relationships (conflicts, communication barriers, assertiveness and emphaty, love); socio-professional relationships (adjustment, maladaptation, exclusion, social stigma, discrimination, justice, equity, morality, responsibility).

Following certain sequences or images symbolically invested in an experiential-unifying groupcontext, participants have the opportunity to access certain unconscious contents and be aware of them. Thus, cognitive and emotional blockages diminishes and the individual is capable of giving other meanings to his past experiences and to create other strategies for a better social adaptation.

RESULTS
THE ANXIETY DYNAMICS IN THE CINEMATHERAPY CONTEXT
Differences between the two sample groups
Initial differences between the two sample groups
Anxiety as an inner state

Table 1.The data outline for the initial means for the two sample groups after the testing for anxiety (as an inner state)

Group Statistics					
	1=experimenta1l, 2=control1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STAIs	1.00	60	51.0833	2.56635	.33131
	2.00	60	51.9167	3.67904	.47496

As it comes out from the table above, for the two 60 subject groups with a 2.56 standard deviation for the first sample group and 3.67 for the second sample group, we show a 51.08 mean for the experimental group compared to a 51.91 mean for the control group.

Table 2.The t test for the initial equality of means between the experimental group and the control group for the anxiety (as an inner state) test.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
STAIs	Equal variances assumed	10.896	.001	-1.439	118	.153	-.83333	.57910	-1.98011	.31344

The t test for the two independent groups' means difference does not highlight any significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The data presented above support this statement (m1=51.08, m2=51.91, inf. lim. 95%=-1.98, sup. lim. 95%= 0.31, t=1.43, df=118, p<0.05; d=0.26).

Anxiety as a trait

Table 3.Data outline for the initial means of the two group samples for the anxiety (as a trait) test taken

Group Statistics					
	1=experimenta1l, 2=control1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STAIt	1.00	60	53.0500	3.63330	.46906
	2.00	60	52.8000	3.69057	.47645

As it comes out from the table above, for the two 60 subject groups with a 3.63 standard deviation for the first sample group and 3.69 for the second sample group, we show a 53.05 mean for the experimental group compared to a 52.80 mean for the control group.

Table 4.The t test for the initial equality of means between the experimental group and the control group for the anxiety (as a trait) test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
STAIt	Equal variances assumed	.275	.601	.374	118	.709	.25000	.66860	-1.07400	1.57400

The t test for the means difference between the two independent sample groups show no significant difference between the experimental and the control group. This analysis aims at revealing the effects of the cinematherapy personal development program. The data presented in the table above support this statement (m1=53.05, m2=52.80, t=0.37, inf. lim. 95%=-1.07, sup. lim. 95%=-1.54, df=118, p>0.05).

Differences between the two sample groups after applying the cinematherapeuticprogram Anxiety as an inner state

Table 5.The data outline for the means of the two sample groups after the applying the test for anxiety (as an inner state) at the end of the cinematherapy personal development program

Group Statistics					
	1=experimental2, 2=control2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STAIs	1.00	60	45.4667	3.12164	.40300
	2.00	60	52.7667	4.31539	.55711

As it comes out from the table above, for the two sample groups (N=60) with a 3.12 standard deviation for the first sample group and 4.31 for the second sample group, we show a 45.46 mean for the experimental group compared to a 52.76 mean for the control group.

Table 6.The t test for the equality of means between the experimental group and the control group for the anxiety (as an inner state) test after participating in the cinematherapyprogram.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances not assumed		5.68	.019	-10.617	107.473	.000	-7.30000	.68760	-8.66301	-5.93699

Independent Samples Test

The t test for the two independent groups' means difference highlights a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The data presented in the above table take us to accepting the hypothesis according to which there are significant differences between the subjects belonging to the experimental group (the participants in the cinematherapy-centered personal development program) and the subjects who were part in the control group (m1=45.46, m2=52.76, inf. lim. 95%=-8.66, sup. lim. 95%=-5.93, t=10.61, df=118, p<0.05; d=-1.94)

Anxiety as a trait

Table 7.The data outline for the means of the two sample groups after the anxiety (as a trait) test applied at the end of the cinematherapyprogram

Group Statistics					
	1=experimental2, 2=control2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STAIt	1.00	60	44.4333	2.68307	.34638
	2.00	60	53.7333	3.80841	.49166

As it comes out from the table above, for the two 60 subject groups with a 2.68 standard deviation for the first sample group and 3.80 for the second sample group, we show a 44.43 mean for the experimental group compared to a 53.73 mean for the control group.

Table 8.The t test for equality of means between the experimental and the control group for the anxiety (as a trait) test taken after participating in the cinematherapyprogram.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances not assumed		8.012	.005	-15.463	105.991	.000	-9.30000	.60143	-10.49239	-8.10761

Independent Samples Test

According to the table presented above, the t test for the means difference between the two independent sample groups show a significant difference between the experimental and the control group after participating in the cinematherapyprogram. The data presented take us to accepting the hypotheses according to which there are significant differences between the subjects in the experi-

mental group (participants in the cinematherapy-centered personal development program) and the subjects in the control group (m1=44.43, m2=53.73, inf. lim. 95%=-10.49, sup. lim. 95%=-8.10, t=15.46, df=118, p<0.05; d=-2.83).

THE SELF-ESTEEM DYNAMICS IN THE CINEMATHERAPY CONTEXT
Differences between the two sample groups
Initial differences between the two sample groups

Table 9.The data outline for the initial means for the two sample groups after the testing for self-esteem

Group Statistics					
	1=experimental1, 2=control1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SRos	1.00	60	20.47	3.422	.442
	2.00	60	18.38	3.141	.406

As it comes out from the table above, for the two 60 subject groups with a 3.42 standard deviation for the first sample group and 3.14 for the second sample group, we show a 20.47 mean for the experimental group compared to a 18.38 mean for the control group.

Table 10.The t test for the initial equality of means between the experimental group and the control group for self-esteem test.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SRos	Equal variances assumed	.891	.347	3.474	118	.001	2.083	.600	.896	3.271

Independent Samples Test

The t test for the two independent groups' means difference does not highlight any significant difference between the experimental group and the control group: m1=20.47, m2=18.38, inf. lim. 95%=0.89, sup. lim. 95%=3.27, t=3.47, df=118, p<0.05;d=0.64.

Differences between the two groups after participating in the cinematherapeuticprogram

Table 11.The data outline for the two groups' self-esteem test means applied after implementing the cinematherapy program

Group Statistics					
	1=experimental2, 2=control2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SRos	1.00	60	25.20	3.293	.425
	2.00	60	18.62	3.523	.455

As it comes out from the table above, for the two 60 subject groups with a 3.29 standard deviation for the first sample group and 3.52 for the second sample group, we show a 25.20 mean for the experimental group compared to a 18.62 mean for the control group.

Table 12.The t test for equality of means between the experimental and the control group for the self-esteem test taken after participating in the cinematherapyprogram

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SRos	Equal variances assumed	.555	.458	10.576	118	.000	6.583	.623	5.351	7.816

The t test for the means difference between the two independent sample groups show a significant difference between the experimental and the control group after participating in the cinematherapyprogram. The data presented in the table above take us to accepting the hypotheses according to which there are significant differences between the experimental group's members (participants in the cinematherapy-centered personal development program) and the control group's members: m1=25.20, m2=18.62, inf. lim. 95%=5.35, sup. lim. 95%=7.81, t=10,57, df=118, p<0,05; d=1.93).

CONCLUSIONS

The cinematherapy group instates multiple benefits, contributing to the individual well-being, and equally important, to the collective well-being.

Used in group personal development, the movie stimulates insights generation, it drills creativity and emotional intelligence, the participants becoming more empathic to others' sufferings, learning to better express their feelings, to communicate assertively and at the same time, to adopt new and healthy ways of approaching daily challenges. By diminishing the anxiety and increasing self-esteem, one insures the conformation to the living world, the individual's harmonious functioning, with visible effects on the environment. By means of movie contact and trainer's company, the beneficiaries learn more and they get to truly know themselves, they learn to free themselves to be authentic and to self-promote, their self-esteem being considerably enhanced.

The participants in such a program are beneficiaries of a complex process meant to enlarge their own cognitive, perceptive and affective spectrum, having at the same time the possibility to identify, analyse and introject new resources, to increase the level of their self-esteem, to diminish their the level of their anxiety, to assimilate new coping mechanisms or novel perspectives on life, which may accompany them on their personal journey towards concrete reality adaptation.

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