

SELF-AWARENESS TRAINING ASSOCIATED WITH PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SEX: A PILOT STUDY^{1,2}

GIUSEPPE VISANI

*Esponde "Institute for Self-Awareness"
Faenza, Italy*

PIERO VENTURI

*Department of Psychiatics
Ospedale Regionale "Sandro Pertini"*

ALESSANDRO ISIDORI AND SAURO TRONCONI

*Esponde "Institute for Self-Awareness"
Faenza, Italy*

Summary.—107 volunteers learning Reiki-Do self-awareness techniques participated in this study. Results indicate that personality traits in healthy participants might be affected by specific self-awareness training, such as Reiki-Do, with participants' sex playing an independent role.

Cloninger personality traits (Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire, TPQ; Cloninger, Przybeck, & Svrakic, 1991) were assessed in 107 healthy volunteers (53 Inexperienced, 54 Experienced Reiki-Do practitioners; 62 women, 45 men) while learning Reiki-Do self-awareness techniques (Motoyama & Brown, 1978; Haberly, 1990; Ray, 1990; Horan, 1991; James & Austin, 1999; Kumar & Telles, 2009; Telles, Gaur, & Balkrishna, 2009), a discipline intended to improve self-awareness and well being, as self reported, including a reduction of symptoms related to anxiety or depression progressing with the training. All participants participated with informed, voluntary, written consent. The participants were enrolled in a training course, and the samples were selected directly from the courses. Inexperienced participants were tested before starting an intensive course consisting of 16 hours of teaching and training, covering 3 days, whereas the Experienced Group participants were tested after 6 months of training following the first intensive course. Participants were asked to complete the Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire (TPQ),³ a questionnaire of 100 items with true/false responses, to evaluate four personality dimensions (Cloninger, 1986, 1988): Novelty Seeking (NS) with the subdimensions NS1 (Exploratory Excitability), NS2 (Impulsiveness), NS3 (Ex-

¹Address correspondence to Giuseppe Visani, M.D., Via Laghi, 33, 48018 Faenza (RA), Italy or e-mail (ilou@libero.it).

²A detailed version of this manuscript is on file in Document APD2010-009. Remit \$10.00 for a photocopy to the Archive for Psychological Data, P.O. Box 7922, Missoula, MT 59807-7922, for recipients inside the USA. Contact APD for shipping rates outside the USA.

³As a validated Italian version of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) was not available at the time of the study, the Italian version of the TPQ was used (Di Piero, Bruti, Venturi, Talamonti, Biondi, Di Legge, *et al.*, 2001).

travagance), and NS4 (Disorderliness), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependence (RD), and Persistence (P).

The data were analyzed according to participants' experience (Inexperienced vs Experienced). Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted for each dimension separately, with sex and experience level as grouping factors, since the dimensions are orthogonal as constructed (see Table 1). A statistically significant interaction was observed between sex and group for Harm Avoidance, with Experienced women scoring lower

TABLE 1
TPQ DIMENSIONS: INTERACTIONS WITH SEX AND SUBGROUPS

Subgroup		Inexperienced Men	Inexperienced Woman	Experienced Men	Experienced Woman
Harm Avoidance*	<i>Mdn</i>	12.37	16.33	14.05	10.55
	<i>SD</i>	5.07	4.98	7.92	6.85
Persistence†	<i>Mdn</i>	6.63 (male + female)		5.96 (male + female)	
	<i>SD</i>	1.74		1.81	
Novelty Seeking 1‡	<i>Mdn</i>	5.44	4.71	4.83	6.10
	<i>SD</i>	1.59	2.00	2.28	1.45
Novelty Seeking 2‡	<i>Mdn</i>	2.12	3.62	3.78	3.60
	<i>SD</i>	1.78	1.88	1.66	1.76
Novelty Seeking 3‡	<i>Mdn</i>	4.19	4.09	4.40	4.40
	<i>SD</i>	1.72	1.51	1.14	1.14
Novelty Seeking 4‡	<i>Mdn</i>	4.62	5.14	4.00	5.35
	<i>SD</i>	1.96	1.68	1.75	1.53

*Age as a covariate: ANCOVA $F_{1,70}=5.99$, $p=.017$, $\eta^2=0.12$. †Age as a covariate: ANCOVA $F_{1,70}=2.81$, $p=.098$, $\eta^2=0.03$. ‡NS1=exploratory excitability; NS2=impulsiveness; NS3=extravagance; NS4=disorderliness. Univariate analysis: NS1: $F_{1,70}=5.39$, $p=.023$, $\eta^2=0.14$; NS2: $F_{1,70}=4.15$, $p=.045$, $\eta^2=0.16$; NS3: $F_{1,70}=0.576$, $p=.454$; NS4: $F_{1,70}=0.184$, $p=.669$; Multivariate analysis: Age as a covariate; three-way ANCOVA, $df=4.834$, $p=.004$, $\eta^2=0.17$.

than Inexperienced women (e.g., a reduction of passivity and fears of punishment), whereas Experienced men scored higher than Inexperienced men. Inexperienced participants scored higher on Persistence, independent of sex. On Novelty Seeking subdimensions (Exploratory Excitability, Impulsiveness, Extravagance, and Disorderliness) there was a significant interaction between group and sex (three-way ANCOVA, $F=4.834$, $p=.004$; $\eta^2=0.17$). Univariate follow-up tests indicated that the significant interaction was due to significant differences in NS1 (Exploratory Excitability, $F_{1,70}=5.39$, $p=.023$; $\eta^2=0.14$) and NS2 (Impulsiveness, $F_{1,70}=4.15$, $p=.045$; $\eta^2=0.16$). In other words, Experienced women had higher scores for Exploratory Excitability than Experienced men; the opposite was observed in Inexperienced men and women. In addition, Experienced men scored significantly higher for Impulsivity than Experienced women; the opposite was observed in the Inexperienced men and women (see Table 1). The results suggest that personality traits in healthy participants might be affected by a specific self-awareness training, such as Reiki-Do, with

participants' sex playing an independent role. More specifically, a reduction of the Harm Avoidance score (e.g., reduction of passivity and of fears of punishment) was seen in Experienced women and was coupled with an increased tendency to explore without impulsiveness. However, it cannot be ruled out that the results are due to a self-selection bias related to personality traits among those continuing Reiki-Do training to become experienced. Further studies are warranted to elucidate the source of the observed differences.

REFERENCES

- CLONINGER, C. R. (1986) A unified biosocial theory of personality and its role in the development of anxiety states. *Psychiatric Developments*, 4(3), 167-226.
- CLONINGER, C. R. (1988) A unified biosocial theory of personality and its role in the development of anxiety states: a reply to commentaries. *Psychiatric Developments*, 6(2), 83-120.
- CLONINGER, C. R., PRZYBECK, T. R., & SVRAKIC, D. M. (1991) The Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire: U.S. normative data. *Psychological Reports*, 69, 1047-1057.
- DI PIERO, V., BRUTI, G., VENTURI, P., TALAMONTI, F., BIONDI, M., DI LEGGE, S., & LENZI, G. L. (2001) Aminergic tone correlates of migraine and tension-type headache: a study using the Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire. *Headache*, 41, 63-71.
- HABERLY, H. J. (1990) *Reiki: Hawayo Takata's story*. Olney, MD: Archedigm.
- HORAN, P. (1991) *The force of Reiki*. W. Heine, The Netherlands: Verlag.
- JAMES, H., & AUSTIN, P. (1999) *Zen and the brain: toward an understanding of meditation and consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- KUMAR, S., & TELLES, S. (2009) Meditative states based on Yoga texts and their effects on performance of a letter-cancellation task. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 109, 679-689.
- MOTOYAMA, H., & BROWN, R. (1978) *Science and revolution of consciousness: ki and psi*. Brookline, MA: Autumn Press.
- RAY, B. (1990) *The Reiki factor*. W. Heine, The Netherlands: Verlag.
- TELLES, S., GAUR, V., & BALKRISHNA, A. (2009) Effect of a Yoga practice session and a Yoga theory session on state anxiety. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 109, 924-930.

Accepted July 23, 2010.

SELF-AWARENESS TRAINING ASSOCIATED WITH
PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SEX: A PILOT STUDY

GIUSEPPE VISANI

Espande "Institute for Self-Awareness"
Faenza, Italy

PIERO VENTURI

Department of Psychiatrics
Ospedale Regionale "Sandro Pertini"

ALESSANDRO ISIDORI AND SAURO TRONCONI

Espande "Institute for Self-Awareness"
Faenza, Italy