Resilience and Emotional Comfort in a Pandemic Through Philosophical Counselling. Experimental Study.

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Abstract: *By undertaking "theōría-práxis" research, this paper aims to: define the key concepts involved in philosophical counselling and examine the effectiveness of philosophical approaches in the context of implementing a philosophical counselling program to reduce the level of emotional distress felt in the context of the Sars pandemic-Cov2. In this sense, I have made a lexicography of the articulations of thought, which are philosophical approaches and philosophical resources, used as therapeutic prescriptions, which have proven their effectiveness in the path of wisdom.*

Keywords: *philosophical counselling program, emotional distress, articulations of philosophical thinking, genesis of the inner world.*

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1. Introduction.

Between education and therapy, philosophical counselling provides the necessary framework for addressing the various problems of contemporary man. Using a wide range of strategies and methods, the process of philosophical counselling involves specific cognitive approaches: interrogation, reflection, dispute, argumentation, examination, contemplation. Therefore, philosophical dialogue paints the noetic world of each of us. The philosophical counselling process aims at clarifying the perspective on the self, others, life, examining the possibilities of solving the client's existential dilemmas, identifying the values, ethical principles that underlie both the decision-making process and personal development. The philosophical resources used in the approach of counselling: thoughts, metaphors, stories, myths, models of virtue capitalize on the search experiences of philosophers, since antiquity, on the road to perfection, being tools for accessing the inner world.

This paper aims to map the articulations of thought involved in the process of philosophical counselling and the philosophical resources used, as therapeutic prescriptions. Archaeological exploration of specific key concepts paints the identity of the process of philosophical counselling, in relation to psycho-social or therapeutic intervention. The originality and value of the paper is revealed by testing the effectiveness of a program of philosophical counselling in terms of reducing the level of emotional distress in the context of the pandemic. The reason why we chose to analyze the cognitive approaches and resources specific to the philosophical counselling process is the belief that a more complete awareness of the nature, roots of different approaches, methods, techniques, procedures allows the adoption of effective practices and interventions. Reviewing the cognitive resources involved in the process of philosophical counselling, we will emphasize the impact they have on: solving the problems faced by the individual and personal development (finding the meaning of life, wisdom, depth, fullness). It is also very important to investigate specific approaches to philosophy, which have proven effective over time through a philosophical counselling program applied to students in the context of the pandemic.

The phrase "how much technology - so much philosophy" (Frunză, 2018) necessarily leads to the re-knowledge of the multiple philosophical approaches, which appear as transgressive hermeneutic experiences, in the way that the hemographer travels in finding the Meaning. Interrogation, dispute, examination, reflection, argumentation, contemplation are the result of the intersection between dilemmas, confrontations, which we go through throughout life and the inner, eternal universe of values. The articulations of

thought are steps taken in the ascent of the contemporary hemograph, on the hermeneutic scale.

A conceptual guide to philosophical approaches shapes the experience of searching, disturbing, and amazing:

- *Interrogation* is the experience of the search, of the inner flight on the orbit of the spiritual evolution opens a new space of knowledge in the dialogue of the philosophical advisor with the client. Between the limits of the known - the unknown, the understood - the misunderstood, in the relationship I - the others, the interrogation is not a simple process of alternating questions and answers, it is a return to oneself. It's a search and a disturbance. In Socratic Maya, the process of interrogation is built on conceptual dynamics: introspection - irony. If in Socratic Maya, the approach of interrogation aims at (re) knowledge of (non) science and the knowledge of science, in the Platonic perspective, knowledge is a mystical experience, irrationalizable in discourse.

- *Reflection* is the solitary journey, initiated through the philosophical dialogue between counselor and client. It is the vehicle for exploring the noetic world of the client in order to develop a philosophical disposition that allows the client to be aware of his limited abilities, to accept with serenity the inevitable, to identify different solutions in managing difficult situations he faces, to discover values, ethical principles, guides in the ascetic path to perfection, to capitalize on the positive experiences lived. It is an opportunity to (re) return to oneself. It is the (re) finding of individuality. It is the harmony of self-rediscovery.

- *Examination* is the philosophical approach frequently used in cognitive-behavioral therapies. With Socratic dexterity, the client discovers that in the same situation people react differently depending on the assessments they make. Our dysfunctional negative emotions are determined by the global assessments we make, by the absolutist expectations, the appreciation in catastrophic terms of the difficult situations. Between the rational and the irrational, the expectations, conceptions of the individual about himself, others, life are actually drawn. Their rational evaluation is the royal path to happiness. The examination process is not limited to the simple assessment of emotions, irrational beliefs related to the emotions felt, but means to discover daily what depends on us and what does not depend on

us. It is a process of awareness of the limits, an incessant exercise of the measure. Philosophizing is a disorder. It is deliberation and liberation from illusions.

- *Dispute/argumentation* - it is the dialogue with itself and about itself that drives the logos, by alternating questions and answers between rational-irrational boundaries, is the interpenetration of shadow with light in trying to get out of the depths of the cave, Platonic rotation of the neck . Metamorphosis. Promoters of cognitive-behavioral therapy have shown that it is the restructuring of irrational beliefs that reduces negative dysfunctional emotions. Psychological intervention is in fact an approach to philosophical dispute and argumentation, in relation to absolutist, catastrophic beliefs, global assessments that the client makes about himself, others and life. It is worry-free. The reformulation of beliefs in rational terms is achieved by applying techniques such as: identifying logical inconsistencies and contradictions, logical analysis of patient arguments, rational anticipation, which have their origin in empiricism, constructivism, rationalism (David, Holdevici, Szamoskozi, Băban, 2000)

- *Contemplation* is the catalytic experience in the dichotomy of searching - finding. It is the T state, which unifies existential antinomies, being associated with another couple of contradictions. It's amazement. Inner peace. Climbing the ladder of virtues. Another level of understanding, which lifts our spirits in relation to our daily worries. "Contemplating the universe was a form of therapy for the ancients. The sight of the Great Picture puts our troubles and anxieties in a cosmic perspective, so that our anxious self calms down in astonishment and trembling. " (Evans, 2013)

Abyssal noology reveals the dimension of the symbolic thinking of each of us, and the tools of access are the genesis of the inner world. Philosophical creations. Therapeutic pills. In this context: metaphors, myths, philosophical stories, models of virtue, thoughts appear as transcendental experiences in the path of the hemograph to perfection. Metaphors - activates unconscious associations that go beyond the conscious patterns used by the individual in relation to current problems, leading to a new type of understanding of his perspective on life, relationship with others, his attitude in relation to existential dilemmas. It invites reflection. Myth (logic) through its (un) told, (un) spoken, (un) deciphered mystery, projects the real into the unreal and the irrational into the rational, accessing higher levels of knowledge. In the process of philosophical counselling, the myth is an experience of

contemplation, in which the client discovers in a symbolic image - the View of the Great Painting. Values, the virtues represents the inner voice, the daimon of Socrates. The state that unifies the contradictory couple (id-supraego), but is associated with another contradictory couple (positive and negative moral consciousness). It ensures the ascent to the ladder of virtues. It is the deed. The stories provide the client with the necessary context to clarify his perspective on life, others, self, facilitating catharsis, self-reconnection and acceptance of difficulties. Clients examine, based on the stories used, the assignment patterns made, (re) interpret the thoughts, emotions experienced in the problematic situations they face, adopting a different point of view.

2. Research methodology.

2.1. Objectives and methodology of the research.
The elaboration of a philosophical counselling program in the context of the Sars-Cov2 pandemic allowed the capitalization of the key concepts specific to the philosophical counselling process (articulations of thought and philosophical resources). The aim of the research is to analyze the effectiveness of this program in reducing the state of emotional discomfort.

2.2. Research hypothesis: Following participation in a philosophical counselling program, there will be significant differences (in the sense of decrease) between pre-test and post-test, in terms of scores on the scale of anxiety, depression, fear, stress for the group that benefited from the intervention as opposed to the non-intervention group;

2.3. The research design involves comparing the pre-test and post-test results to the experimental group and the control group. The independent variable is the intervention. The dependent variables are: students' scores on the anxiety, depression, fear, stress scales. The experimental approach involved the manipulation of the independent variable, in our case the application of the philosophical counselling program focused on the Covid pandemic, in order to modify the dependent variables: scores on the scales of depression, anxiety, fear, stress. To interpret the data and identify the degree to which the independent variable has an influence on the dependent variable, we opted for data processing with the statistical program SPSS, illustrating the differences between the means of the two groups by using the t test.

2.4. Procedures: In order to carry out the research, we selected two classes of students from the Theoretical High School Negreşti Oaş, aged 15/16 years. Two grades of 10 were chosen, relatively homogeneous classes of students in terms of the number of students (25, 23 students), the structure of the class by gender, the school performance that the students of these two classes have, the teachers who teach these two classes are the same

(except for the Romanian language teacher). We also tried to combat the intervention of disruptive factors, which could influence the research results by applying the questionnaires in the same time period to both the control group and the experimental group, in the pre-intervention and post-intervention phase.

2.5. Instruments. To assess students' emotional distress we used the following tools: Anxiety Scale (6 items), Stress Scale (24 items), Depression Scale (13 items), Fear Scale (7 items). Each item for all the tools presented is rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, depending on how much or not the item for the topic fits (1- doesn't suit you at all, and 5 fits me very well) . The score obtained by the subject is achieved by the sum of the items that make up each scale. The application of the scales was done in groups, both in pre-intervention and in post-intervention, keeping the same administration conditions.

2.6. The intervention was carried out in a class of students, by applying a program of philosophical counselling in the context of the pandemic, entitled: Again together !. The philosophical counselling program was carried out during 8 sessions, structured on the following topics: Truth, Responsibility, Wisdom, Tolerance (2 hours / topic), conducted in the experimental group during the collective counselling classes at the Psychopedagogical Assistance Office of the Theoretical High School Negreşti Oaş.

Among the objectives of the philosophical counselling program carried out we mention:

☐ to discover the criteria on the basis of which we establish the truth value of the information in the context of the pandemic,

☐ to identify the philosophical approaches effective in evaluating the truth value of information (interrogation, reflection, argumentation, examination, contemplation)

☐ assess the impact of true / false information in adapting to problematic situations,

☐ distinguish between myth and truth in relation to pandemic information,

☐ to appreciate the emotions felt in connection with various problematic situations specific to the pandemic,

☐ to discover coping strategies adaptive to the challenges we face in the pandemic, starting from the philosophical stories, case studies, philosophical metaphors presented,

☐ establish behaviors and routines that increase the ability to adapt to the new school environment,

 to bring arguments for or against the moral dilemmas subject to debate.

The philosophical approaches involved in counselling activities were: questioning, reflection, examination, argumentation, contemplation. Among the methods, procedures, resources used we mention: case studies / models to follow, thoughts, metaphors, philosophical stories, problematization, brainstorming, exemplification, etc. To facilitate the philosophizing process, the proposed tasks focused on individual, pair or group work.

2.7. Analysis and interpretation of results. The data analysis was done both in descriptive terms (mean, standard deviation) and in statistical terms (to compare the differences recorded). The t test was used in the data analysis. We chose this test because we performed intra-group comparisons in both the control group and the experimental group, the first measurement being performed in the pre-intervention phase and the second in the post-intervention phase. The sample on which we performed the measurements is less than 30.

Processing and interpretation of results. The following are the averages and standard deviations of the subjects from both groups in the two moments in which the evaluation was performed: pre-test and post-test on the four scales.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis
Source: Authors' personal data

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Depression Pre Exp	2.4762	.24513
Depression Post Exp	1.8629	.14271
Fear Pre Exp	11.2857	.84837
Fear Post Exp	1.4738	.52722
Stress Pre Exp	3.0952	2.40634
Stress Post Exp	.7548	.50860
Anxiety Pre Exp	1.0476	1.32198
Anxiety Post Exp	.1714	.22442
Depression Pre Control	1.9186	.73058
Depression Post Control	2.2205	1.11283
Fear Pre Control	11.2857	3.68975
Fear Post Control	1.8600	.92129
Stress Pre Control	3.3333	2.83431
Stress Post Control	.8708	.81412
Anxiety Pre Control	.5714	1.53530
Anxiety Post Control	.4832	.76731

Analyzing the contained in the table, for the experimental group we notice that there are differences between the averages of the results obtained at all scales: depression, anxiety, fear, stress between pre-test and post-test. A decrease in pre-test and post-test averages can be observed on all scales.

Comparing the averages obtained at the scales evaluated for the control group in the pre-test and post-test we find an increase in the average on the depression scale. We notice that there are differences between the averages of the results recorded on the anxiety, fear and stress scales, in the sense of decreasing them.

A statistical analysis of the pre- and post-test differences for the experimental group and the control group was then used to verify whether or not these differences were statistically significant.

Table 2. Statistical analysis
Source: Authors' personal data

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	DepresiePreE - DepresiePostE	.61333	1.32645	.28945	.00954	1.21713	2.119	20	.047
Pair 2	TeamaPreE - TeamaPostE	9.81190	3.90852	.85291	8.03277	11.59104	11.504	20	.000
Pair 3	StresPreE - StresPostE	2.34048	2.27041	.49544	1.30700	3.37396	4.724	20	.000
Pair 4	AnxietatePreE - AnxietatePostE	.87619	1.38749	.30278	.24461	1.50777	2.894	20	.009
Pair 5	DepresiePreC - DepresiePostC	-.30190	1.37567	.30020	-.92810	.32429	-1.006	20	.327
Pair 6	TeamaPreC - TeamaPostC	9.42571	3.55697	.77620	7.80660	11.04483	12.143	20	.000
Pair 7	StresPreC - StresPostC	2.46256	2.89926	.63267	1.14284	3.78229	3.892	20	.001
Pair 8	AnxietatePreC - AnxietatePostC	.08825	1.66114	.36249	-.66789	.84440	.243	20	.810

Intra-group comparisons reveal statistically significant differences in the experimental group on all scales: depression, anxiety, fear, stress, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the philosophical counselling program, applied in the context of the pandemic. Thus, it was recorded:

● on the depression scale a t = 2,119, statistically significant difference in the program of 0, 047,

● on the fear scales t = 11,504 and stress t = 4,724 the statistical differences recorded are significant at the threshold of 0.000

● on the anxiety scale t = 2.894 the difference is significant at the threshold of 0.009.

Regarding the control group, intra-group comparisons indicate:

● statistically significant differences only on the fear (t = 12,143) and stress (3,892) scales for the threshold of 0.000 and 0.001;

● on the depression scale a t = -1.006, at the threshold of 0.327, statistically insignificant difference (an increase in the scores recorded in the post-test)

● on the anxiety scale a t = 2.83 at the threshold of 0.810, statistically insignificant difference.

The statistical results presented above confirm the effectiveness of implementing a philosophical counselling program applied in an educational context in order to reduce the state of anxiety and depression felt in adolescents, regarding the Covid pandemic.

The study revealed the following results:

➢ Confirmation of the hypothesis regarding the registration of statistically significant differences within the group between the two stages of the evaluation, pre-test and post-test in terms of depression, anxiety, for the group that benefited from the intervention as opposed to the control group

➢ The reduction of the level of fear and stress felt in both groups (experimental and control) can be explained by the phenomenon of progressive desensitization due to daily exposure to the difficult situation (possibility of infection), after a period of isolation of adolescents.

➢ It is recommended to test the effectiveness of this philosophical counselling program in a clinical context (people diagnosed with depression / anxiety), taking into account inter-group comparisons (with pathology and non-pathology)

3. Conclusions

Trained in a philosophical dialogue, the client discovers in the articulations of thought (interrogation, reflection, dispute / argumentation, examination, contemplation), a new path to self-discovery starting from the aspiration for perfection. Therefore, the philosophical approaches used in the counselling process shape the noetic world of each of us. The well-being of the person is determined by the way in which the different forms of the individual's image are structured and integrated: perceptual, social, rational, instinctual (Sîmbotin, 2020). In fact, the construction of self-image is a dynamic and permanent process, achieved by involving cognitive processes. In this context, the approach of philosophical counselling aims to explore the concordance between the images of the individual, the awareness of the dissonances between self-perception and constructed self-image, the discrepancies between self-image and its social perception, the

inconsistencies between real and ideal self-image. incompatibilities between different interpretations of self-image (Silistraru et al, 2021; Luca et al, 2022). In an attempt to clarify the perspective on self / others / life, to examine the possibilities of solving the client's existential dilemmas, to identify the values / ethical principles that underlie the decision-making process / personal development, the counselor uses: thoughts, metaphors , stories, myths, models of virtue capitalizing on the search experiences of philosophers, since antiquity, on the road to perfection. Allegorical language is the way we unravel the mysteries of life. The solution of the contemporary hemographer to the challenges he faces is to access the stylistic matrix: Personality. Discovering the Meaning of Life.

Starting from the lexicography of the articulations of thought, which consists in philosophical approaches and the description of philosophical resources, used as therapeutic prescriptions, which proved their effectiveness in the path of wisdom, this paper examined the effectiveness of implementing a program of philosophical counselling to reduce the level of emotional distress felt in the context of the Sars-Cov pandemic2. An experimental study showing intra-group comparisons demonstrated the effectiveness of the philosophical counselling program in reducing depression and anxiety. The study has as vulnerabilities: a small number of subjects and the absence of a follow-up analysis to see if the effects are maintained over time. Although the number of subjects in each group is not very high, from a statistical point of view the study is relevant (by reference to the number of high school and city students) and the results entitle us to trust their validity. However, based on these results, we will develop further studies to overcome these limitations: the inclusion of a larger number of participants and follow-up testing. The value of this study lies in the development and implementation of the program of philosophical counselling, demonstrating the effectiveness of this program on anxiety and depression in adolescents. The results obtained from the study are premises that we must take into account in the process of philosophical counselling. It is necessary to involve students in the practices of philosophy. Philosophical counselling programs implemented in the educational system, create new opportunities to understand the difficult situations faced by students, to clarify the perspective on life, to examine and restructure irrational beliefs, to adhere to a set of values, models of virtue that they are essential premises in solving problems and making decisions.

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