

An Analysis of MMPI-2 on Ego Strength, Positive Malingering, and Anxiety

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Abstract: *Ego Strength (ES), Malingering (Mp), and Anxiety (Anx) are psychiatric signs that the severity of each individual is different, especially the condition of a person in a particular activity group, so it is interesting to study. The purpose of this study was to determine the ego strength (ES), positive malingering (Mp), and anxiety (Anx) in the Energetic Power Yoga training participants in Malang. The research method was carried out qualitatively and analyzed using the Strauss-Corbin paradigm data triangulation method, consisting of 5 research samples. The measuring instrument used was the MMPI-2 test, which is a standard test tool that can measure the high and low aspects of research that are regulated by its reliability and validity. The results showed that four subjects had lower ego strength, while one subject had better ego strength. The low level of ego strength in 4 items indicates that the motivation to participate in yoga merely because of a lifestyle or influence from friends. The Mp test showed that two subjects tried to perform better, and the value of the positive malingering of the other three subjects was low. The anxiety in the two subjects was high, while on the other three subjects were low, which means that trainees who practiced yoga had positive impacts in reducing anxiety. The conclusion is that yoga could reduce anxiety.*

Keywords: *anxiety, ego strength, positive malingering, yoga*

Introduction

Obstacles in life can affect one's *ego strength*, making him/her a person with either a weak or strong mentality. *Ego strength* is a power used by a person to face life challenges, from the light to heavy ones. If it is good, the owner must be able to keep his/her psychological stability while dealing with stress, which is caused by either internal or external factors (Petrović, Peraica, & Kozarić-Kovačić, 2018; Shahsavarani, Azad, Abadi, & Kalkhoran, 2015).

Sigmund Freud divides the human psyche into three parts: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. *The Id* is the oldest and primitive nature that controls the human's basic instinct. *The ego* is the modification of *id*. The ego can handle reality, and it acts as the personality's executive that manages which instinct to be satisfied by the priority of needs. *The superego* acts as the moral power of character and it develops from *ego* along with values taught by parents in the form of both punishment and compliment (Petrović et al., 2018; Ramachandran, 2012). According to Freud, Dewey stated that individuals who have good ego strength could control their personal drives regardless of being under any inconvenient situation and can direct their energy to long-term purposes (Ramachandran, 2012).

Robbins and Clouter stated that two personality variables affect behavior by the individual's conviction in what is right or wrong. They are ego strength and locus of control. Ego strength is the scale of personality concerning the capacity of one's conviction. The locus of control is a personal trait that measures the degree of how an individual is sure that he/she can control his/her fate (Stephen P. Robbins, 2012).

When a person goes through many problems in life until arriving at a situation where he/she is not able to

overcome, the problem may cause any psychological disorders such as *anxiety* and *positive malingering*. Malingering constitutes a behavior in which the doer consciously pretends to be sick to avoid responsibility or a load of work (Hassan, Mohd Hassan, Kassim, & Hamzah, 2018; Iseselo, Kajula, & Yahya-Malima, 2016).

According to DSM V-TR, positive malingering is an intentional behavior resulting in physical and psychological symptoms that are fake or overstated and driven by external benefits such as avoiding military obligation, avoiding work, grabbing financial compensation, avoiding criminal execution, or obtaining drugs (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Anxiety is a state occurring as a result of an individual's adjustment to any condition of a new environment or a reaction to a specific threat/danger. Anxiety is considered a disorder when it happens repetitively which causes both physical and mental damages. Anxiety is a subjective emotion from restiveness, inconvenience, fear, and worry, followed by several autonomous and somatic symptoms. Anxiety constitutes a normal emotional condition expected as a signal of danger. However, when it unreasonably keeps happening because of stressing incident or stimulation or disturbance in daily activities, it can be considered anxiety disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Bandelow, Michaelis, & Wedekind, 2017; Grupe & Nitschke, 2013).

According to Nevid et al., the symptoms of anxiety are divided into three types, 1) physical symptoms such as restiveness, trembling body, excessive sweat, difficult breath, rapid heartbeat, fatigue, cold sweat, anger or irritability; 2) behavioral symptoms which are

marked with the act of escaping, being shocked, being attached, and dependent; 3) cognitive symptoms which are being worried about something, being afraid of something to happen in the future, being convinced that something frightening will happen, being fearful of inability to overcome the problem, being confused, being hard to concentrate, etc. Yoga is an activity encompassing breathing techniques and exercises for strengthening body posture and meditation. The increase of popularity and emphasis on the relationship of soul, body, and mentality are the reasons for exploring yoga in healing mental disorders like anxiety and distress (Li & Goldsmith, 2012; Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2005).

Yoga is an ancient method used and believed to be able to give spiritual and physical balance in an individual. Yoga exercise brings the balance through controlling body and mind so that emotion within can be managed. Good emotion control and self-control can increase ego strength, which is one's power and courage against psychological disorder (Joshi & De Sousa, 2012; Kusilka, 2014; Yadav & Kumar, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to observe the effect of yoga on the performance of ego strength, positive malingering, and anxiety by using an analysis of MMPI-2. This research is expected to provide an overview of the effects of yoga on the ego strength, positive malingering, and anxiety as an approach to yoga become an alternative method for improving mental health.

Method

The selection of participants based on specific characteristics. Five persons were involved in this research as participants to obtain more diverse data and to make the research's validity stronger. The characteristics of the participants were women of 20-30 years old because individuals in that range of age are believed to have been experiencing a heavy rate of stress due to job, family, and society. Yoga club members who participated in this study are those who have been practicing for at least one year and they have mastered techniques of yoga movements. Their Ego Strength, Positive Malingering and Anxiety were observed. Before carrying out triangulation to the research data, the approach to the participants made with a method called *rapport*, in which the relationship between the researcher and subjects made as if there was no distance separating them.

The qualitative data were collected in natural conditions from the primary sources through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The other data were collected using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) test. One of the essential things in the research is the stage of data analysis. In this study, the data analysis will be conducted using the triangulation method — data obtained in this research based on observation, interview, and test MMPI-2.

Results

The table below shows the results of the MMPI-2 Test on the five subjects.

Table 1. MMPI-2 Test's results

Sub-Test	Subje ct 1	Subje ct 2	Subje ct 3	Subje ct 4	Subje ct 5
<i>Ego Strength</i>	30	37	30	56	34
<i>Positive Malingering</i>	47	68	40	60	40
<i>Anxiety</i>	65	55	53	40	70

The *Ego Strength* of the Subject 1, 2, 3, and 5 showed a low scale, and the 4 showed high scale. The low ego strength of a person indicates that he/she is less confident, easily influenced by an external force, less able to solve a problem, or difficult to adapt to the environment. Based on the interview, it was found that the four subjects at the beginning joined yoga exercise because friends invited them and they wanted to make more friends. Having developed as a trend, people did yoga merely for keeping up with the modern lifestyle, and their desire to join yoga club did not come from within themselves. Because their ego strength was low, they were easily influenced by external factors in making a decision.

The results of the *Positive Malingering* (Mp) test on the subjects showed that three of them (1, 3, and 5) had a low score, and the other two (2 and 4) had a high score (>60). The high scale of Mp showed that they tried to look better than their real conditions. The attempt to look better could be to cover their weaknesses or due to their high confidence. Therefore, it can be said that *ego strength* and *positive malingering* could not be separated because of both influences of each other. With Mp = 68 and Es = 37, the subject two just showed that by forcing herself to join the yoga club to look better, she was unable to refuse her friends' request. With Mp = 60 and Es = 56, subject 4 showed that she tried to look better by doing yoga because she was aware of the benefits of yoga for her.

The result of *Anxiety* test on the subjects showed that the scale of anxiety in subject 1 and 5 was high, while in the subject 2, 3, and four were low (<65). Subject 1 and 5 were too anxious because they found their loads of work too heavy. The scale of anxiety can be influenced by ego strength because it relates to the ability to cope with stress. The score of Es gained by the subject one and five respectively were 30 and 34, while their *Anxiety* were 65 and 70, meaning that they were less able to overcome their stress and yoga exercise had not been able to reduce their anxiety. The test results of the subject 2 and 3 showed that having low ego strength could impact negatively on their anxiety levels which were low too. Therefore, yoga exercises they performed affect their anxiety.

Discussion

Yoga is a holistic system of exercising body and mind to build mental and physical health. It includes training of body postures, breathing techniques, relaxation, concentration, and meditation. Yoga and meditation have been proven to reduce stress and increase mood. Researches documenting the benefits of yoga therapy has flourished in the last three decades, and today clinical tests are being done on mental conditions such as depression and anxiety. There have been approximately 50 biometric studies on yoga as therapeutic intervention published since 2003, discussing and reporting the benefits of yoga as a means of mental health therapy (Joshi & De Sousa, 2012; Khalsa, Hickey-Schultz, Cohen, Steiner, & Cope, 2012).

MMPI-2 Test was used to give a picture of an individual's personality in terms of his/her ego strength, positive malingering, and anxiety. The high value of ego strength (>45) showed that an individual with good confidence could overcome the problem and pressure on his/her life. The high scale of Ego strength also indicates an individual who has 1) little heavy psychopathological problem, 2) has stable emotion, 3) loves to seek sensation, and 4) is easy to make a relationship with others (Graham, 2012). According to Gaur et al., people who practiced Preksha Meditation for 25 days increased their ego strength, confidence, self-assurance, spontaneity, and emotionally more stable, calm, and able to face their reality and reduced their jealousy (Singh & Kaur, 2008).

The value of *positive malingering* (Mp) ≥ 60 shows one's desire to show up for adjusting with his/her environment and covering his/her weakness (Nichols, 2011). The high value of *Anxiety* (Anx) ≥ 65 indicates that an individual 1) often feels anxious and frightened, 2) has disturbing nightmare, 3) is difficult to concentrate, 4) often goes through nightmare and sleep disorder, 5) is depressed, 6) has suicidal tendency, 7) goes through somatic disorder, 8) is unable to cope well with stress, 9) feels overwhelmed with demand of his/her life, and 10) feels pessimistic with his/her life (Graham, 2012).

The research results revealed that subjects 1 and 5 have high anxiety levels compared to the other three subjects. Based on the interview, subjects 1 and 5 acknowledged that they had problems related to their jobs. It indicates that yoga exercises performed by subjects 1 and 5 did not give effect to help reduce anxiety. A study by Girodo and colleagues also did not yield favorable results of meditation in patients with a diagnosed anxiety disorder over 6 to 8 month periods (Li & Goldsmith, 2012).

Conclusion

Yoga is an old method believed to be able to give a balance between spiritual and physical health. Based on the results of the MMPI-2 Test used in this research, the profiles of the ego strength of the four subjects were low (<40), while one subject gained a high score

(Es=58). Three subjects had a low scale of positive malingering (<60) while the two others had a high scale. Two subjects had a high scale of anxiety (>65) and the other three had a low scale. The test results showed that yoga exercise performed by the subjects did not affect much because they did it to keep up with the current trend of lifestyle purposes. They did it not on inner motivation and awareness of the benefits of yoga.

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