PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING OF MIU STUDENTS: FIRST REPORT

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Students at Maharishi International University practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique scored consistently higher than other college students on scales of self-actualization. — EDITORS

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) profile of Maharishi International University (MIU) students who practiced the Transcendental Meditation technique regularly was compared to profiles presented in the POI manual for a group of college students and for a group of relatively self-actualized people. MIU students scored significantly higher than nonmeditating college students on eight of the 12 POI scales, indicating that the MIU students were generally more self-actualized than other college students. MIU students also scored significantly higher than a group of people judged to be relatively self-actualized on two of the POI scales and scored as high as the self-actualized people on five of the POI scales. These results, combined with those of other studies, indicate that the Transcendental Meditation program brings about significant growth toward actualization of full human potential.

INTRODUCTION

A basic postulate of the Science of Creative Intelligence, founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is that every individual has the potential for experiencing pure creative intelligence—unbounded awareness, or transcendent consciousness—a fourth state of consciousness different from waking, dreaming, and sleeping. This is said to be a state of least excitation of the mind, a state of maximum mental and physiological orderliness, a field of pure potentiality and unlimited possibilities. The experience of the state of least excitation is that of the experiencer experiencing himself without an object of experience—the subject without an object, the "I" in a state of being without acting.

A second postulate of the Science of Creative Intelligence is that the state of transcendent consciousness is the home of all the laws of nature, by which it is meant that an individual who has permanently gained this state of awareness spontaneously acts in a way that is supportive of and supported by the laws of nature operating in any situation. The orderliness and integration on the mental and physical levels, accompanying the experience of transcendent consciousness, allow the human nervous system to be exquisitely sensitive to the conditions within itself, as well as to the interactions between it and the environment, and to act as a perfect transducer, with flexibility enough to interpret the ever-changing internal and external conditions in such a way that the individual acts in complete accordance with the laws of nature.

The Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique is the practical procedure of the Science of Creative Intelligence for taking the mind to levels of less and less excitation until even the subtest form of thought is transcended and the mind experiences the state of least excitation. When the Transcendental Meditation technique is practiced regularly twice a day and is alternated with one's usual daily activity, the nervous system becomes habituated to maintain this state of least excitation along with activity. Consequently, every aspect of action on all levels of life—physiological, psychological, sociological, and ecological—increases in adaptability, stability, integration, purification, and growth.

This view of man's potentiality along with the technology for developing that potentiality through the Transcendental Meditation program greatly extends the possibilities for the study of self-actualization in the field of psychology.

The state of least excitation of consciousness, wherein the experiencer experiences himself without an object of experience, is defined in the Science of Creative Intelligence as an experience of the Self, capital S. This is an absolute state of awareness, an experience of the subject's own inner nature, an absolute reference point for the personality unmodified by any external object or ex-
perience. Other definitions of the self, small s, are relativistic, defining individuality in terms of its tendencies, attributes, talents, possessions, etc.

Self-actualization, therefore, has its highest meaning in the regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique, through which the Self is made actual and its full potential is expressed in activity.

This conception of self-actualization beautifully parallels the concept as developed by psychologists, notably Abraham Maslow. Thus, the Transcendental Meditation program brings practical fulfillment to Maslow's description of self-actualization, as has been demonstrated by numerous scientific experiments on TM.

According to Maslow, self-actualization refers to a state of full development and integration of all the potentialities inherent in human life. He has observed that healthy people, having satisfied certain basic needs, are primarily motivated by the desire to fulfill their potential, to achieve self-actualization. Such people are characterized by the following traits taken from Maslow (16), which have been shown to improve among those practicing the TM technique:

1. Superior perception of reality (3, 20, 21, 22, 23)
2. Increased acceptance of self, of others, and of nature (8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 25, 29)
3. Increased spontaneity (8, 9, 11, 17, 25)
4. Increased problem-centering (7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31)
5. Increased detachment and desire for privacy (11, 17, 25)
6. Increased autonomy and resistance to enculturation (8, 9, 11, 29)
7. Greater freshness of appreciation and richness of emotional reaction (11, 17, 25)
8. Higher frequency of peak experiences
9. Increased identification with the human species (11, 17, 25)
10. Changed (improved) interpersonal relations (11, 17, 25, 29)
11. More democratic character structure (10, 24, 32)
12. Greatly increased creativity (15, 29)
13. Changes in the value system (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 26, 27, 29)

Several studies (e.g., 17, 25) have demonstrated that within the first few months after beginning the Transcendental Meditation program people improve significantly on a number of the scales of the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), a test developed by Shostrom (30) to measure values and behavior important in the development of self-actualization.

The present study was a first attempt to study self-actualization in students entering Maharishi International University (MIU) by comparing their POI profile with that of a group of nonmeditating college students and with that of a group of people judged to be relatively self-actualized.

One of the goals of Maharishi International University is to provide fully developed, self-actualized citizens by making the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique a regular part of the student's curriculum, thus developing each student's underlying intelligence and power of comprehension (32, 33).

At Maharishi International University the student grows in intelligence while he learns the traditional academic disciplines. The traditional disciplines are presented in the light of the Science of Creative Intelligence, which provides a systematic investigation of the principles underlying all the sciences on the basis of the experience and understanding of the simplest, most basic state of consciousness. This approach to traditional disciplines is designed to enable students to develop a profound and integrated comprehension of a number of fields.

Students attending MIU are obviously highly committed to the TM program and must feel that they have benefitted from practicing the TM technique. Also, these students generally have been meditating for some time before entering MIU. Since the TM program has been shown to develop various qualities characteristic of self-actualized people, it was predicted that MIU students would have a POI profile showing greater development in the direction of self-actualization than that of nonmeditating college students. Also, it was of interest to investigate the degree to which the POI profile of the MIU students approached that of a group of people judged to be self-actualized.

**METHOD**

A sample of 48 entering MIU students was administered Shostrom's Personality Orientation Inventory in the fall of 1973. Means for the MIU students on each scale were compared with those for a group of 136 college students listed in the POI manual (30, p. 24) using t-tests for independent means. Although the MIU students were just entering MIU, most had attended college elsewhere for at least a year. Also, the mean age of the MIU students was 21.2 years. Therefore, MIU students were compared with a group of college students rather than with a group of entering freshmen. Scale means for the MIU students were also compared with those of a group of 29 people judged by clinical psychologists to be "relatively self-actualized" (30, p. 26).
RESULTS

Figure 1 presents the POI profiles of the MIU students, the nonmeditating college students, and the group of relatively self-actualized people. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations on each POI scale for the MIU students and the nonmeditating students. Also presented are the results of t-tests comparing the means of the two groups on each scale. The MIU students scored significantly higher than nonmeditating college students on the Time Competent, Inner-Directed, Self-actualizing Value, Spontaneity, Self-regard, Nature of Man Constructive, Synergy, and Capacity for Intimate Contact scales. The MIU students did not differ from the nonmeditating college students on the scales Existentiality, Feeling Reactivity, and Self-acceptance, and they scored significantly lower on the Acceptance of Aggression scale than college students. Thus, the meditators' scores were significantly more in the direction of self-actualization than the nonmeditators' scores on eight of the 12 scales of the POI, including both of the major scales, Time Competent and Inner-Directed.

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for the group of MIU students and the group of relatively self-actualized people and the results of t-tests comparing the two means. The MIU students scored significantly higher than the self-actualized group on two scales: Self-regard and Nature of Man Constructive. The MIU students did not differ significantly from the self-actualized group on the scales Time Competent, Self-actualizing Value, Feeling Reactivity, Spontaneity, and Synergy. The MIU students scored significantly lower than the self-actualized group on the scales Inner-Directed, Existentiality, Self-acceptance, Acceptance of Aggression, and Capacity for Intimate Contact.

DISCUSSION

In general, these comparisons indicate that the MIU students' scores were more in the direction of self-actualization than the nonmeditating college students' scores on the majority of the POI scales. Also, MIU students scored about as well as or better than the group of self-actualized people on seven of the 12 POI scales. These results do not prove that the MIU students grew in the values of self-actualization after they began practicing the TM technique. However, since other studies have demonstrated that significant improvements in the direction of greater self-actualization develop in individuals within the first few months of practicing TM, as measured by the POI (17, 25) and the Northridge Developmental Scale (10, 28), it seems likely that the marked development in the direction of self-actualization shown by the MIU students on many of the POI scales resulted from the Transcendental Meditation program.
TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF MIU STUDENTS WITH OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE POI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>MIU STUDENTS</th>
<th>OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Competent</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inner-Directed</td>
<td>87.35</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-actualizing Value</td>
<td>21.71</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Existentiality</td>
<td>19.85</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling Reactivity</td>
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<td>2.97</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of Man Constructive</td>
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<td>1.54</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synergy</td>
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<td>Acceptance of Aggression</td>
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<td>2.79</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for Intimate Contact</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NS = not significant.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF MIU STUDENTS WITH RELATIVELY SELF-ACTUALIZED PEOPLE ON THE POI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>MIU STUDENTS</th>
<th>SELF-ACTUALIZED PEOPLE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Self-acceptance</td>
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<td>Nature of Man Constructive</td>
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<td>Synergy</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>1.31</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of Aggression</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity for Intimate Contact</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NS = not significant.

However, some marked discrepancies between the MIU student group and the self-actualized group did occur. The MIU students scored lower than the self-actualized group on the Existentiality, Self-acceptance, and Acceptance of Aggression scales, indicating that the MIU students had a lower tendency to adjust their principles or values to particular situations (existentiality), accept their own weaknesses (self-acceptance), or accept their natural aggressiveness (acceptance of aggression). Certain premises of the Science of Creative Intelligence may explain these apparent discrepancies. First, the Science of Creative Intelligence is concerned with the principles that underlie all systems of behavior—physical, biological, and social. Individuals with a clear understanding of such principles might well be expected to apply them consistently in their lives. An existential approach to life, in which different values are applied in different situations, is not necessarily inconsistent with a holistic value system reflecting underlying laws of human behavior as described by the Science of Creative Intelligence. The low scores of the MIU students on the Existentiality scale may thus indicate a weakness in the POI, which fails to distinguish sufficiently between rigid application of fixed values and flexible application of broad principles.

Second, the low scores of the MIU students on the Self-acceptance and Acceptance of Aggression scales may arise from their understanding, based on the Science of Creative Intelligence, that a fully developed individual, while remaining dynamic, is free from deficiencies and aggression born of inner weakness. Again, this may indicate a failure of the POI to distinguish between acceptance of oneself as one is at the moment and acceptance of oneself as the best one could possibly be. If the individual has a well-developed understanding of what a fully actualized person is, and realistically feels that his aggression and weakness are not part of it, his self-acceptance will tend to be colored by this understanding. Moreover, the high scores of MIU students on the Spon-
taneity and Self-regard scales indicate that they do accept themselves in terms of the moment without denial and defensiveness, and do believe strongly in their own basic value and strength.

It could be argued that the MIU students showed considerable self-actualization on the POI because they were trying to make a good impression. Therefore, their profile was compared with that of a group of college students instructed "to make a good impression" (30). The scale means of the MIU students were higher than those of the "good impression" group. However, the patterns of the profiles of the two groups were similar in some places. In particular, the "good impression" group had low means on the Existentiality, Self-acceptance, and Acceptance of Aggression scales and a high mean on the Self-regard scale, as did the MIU students. These results suggest that the MIU students may have been trying to make a good impression to some extent when they took the POI. However, it is also possible that they responded honestly and that their profile reflects the pattern of characteristics of individuals who are rapidly growing toward full actualization of their potential and have already progressed in that direction more than the average person. The nonmediating college students may have had a similar idea of the qualities such evolving individuals would have and may have responded accordingly on the POI. These results again suggest that Shostrom's conceptualization and measurement of the characteristics of those progressing well along the path toward full actualization of human potential may be somewhat in error. This view is supported by improvements in physiology, psychomotor performance, intellectual performance, and emotional stability in people practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique reported in the independent studies cited above.

Therefore, we are currently constructing a new developmental scale based on the precise and comprehensive description of the process and goals of human evolution presented by the Science of Creative Intelligence. This new scale will then be validated by longitudinal studies of people practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique using criteria of intellectual and psychomotor performance, EEG, and psychophysiological measures of adaptability, stability, and integration.

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