

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**This thesis is dedicated to my family:** My chosen soul mate; Dominique. My precious children: Kirstin, Justin and Jevon. Without their support and love it would have been impossible to complete this research. Their commitment and love supported me in the darkest moments of my life. I thank my mother, whose prayers symbolised for me a faith in God that sustained me when nothing else could.

**I thank my supervisors:**

- **Prof. Chris Myburgh.** A chance meeting in the Place of Peace was one of the best things that ever happened in my life; it couldn't have happened in a better place or with a better person. He guided me towards the fulfilment of a dream.
- My co-promoter, **Prof. Marie Poggenpoel.** The Chinese have a saying: "how wonderful when old friends meet". Thanks for your compassionate understanding and firm grip *en route*.

My grateful thanks go out to the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, and in particular to the previous Dean of the Faculty of Arts, **Prof. Annette Combrink.** She made it possible for me to pursue my studies at the Rand Afrikaans University, and was instrumental in granting me the study leave without which research of this scope would have been impossible. She gave financial assistance and supported me throughout two years of intensive research. My thanks to Prof. Paul Schutte, Director of the School for Communication Studies, who allowed me some leeway when needed.

A very special thanks to my colleagues who stepped in twice to assist me. To **Rita Swanepoel**; Subject Head, History of Art, and **Esme Nienaber**; the first time to facilitate study leave; the second time when tragedy crossed my path.

I thank:

- **Mrs Amanda Homan** for her incredible work in doing the transcripts.
- **Prof. Casper Lessing** for his work on the bibliography.
- With extreme gratitude the pantheon of goddesses without whose co-operation this research could not possibly have transpired. I salute you all.

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## ABSTRACT

TITLE: A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE UTILIZATION OF VISUAL ARTS IN THE FACILITATION OF HEALTHY STRESS MANAGEMENT IN YOUNG ADULTS.

There is nothing new about the utilization of the arts, generally speaking, as a method of facilitation. It is used not only in the context of the performing arts such as dance, drama and music, but particularly too in painting, sculpture, pottery, weaving, and a number of other art media and types. Yet all of these use a hands-on approach whereby it is expected of the participants to be active in the act of creation or performing. Of these, music stands out as an art form that can be used in a non-performance mode, and where a passive engagement with the *completed* work of art receives the focus. No such approach seems to have been suggested, described or developed for the visual arts. This study suggests and researches exactly that: the use of visual art works without involving a hands-on creative process, in a psycho-educational facilitative programme.

This process is described as an isomorphic identification with the work of art, and the research design has been characterised by the relative novelty of the suggested approach towards intervention and stress facilitation outlined in this thesis. Although the term isomorphic identification is not of uncommon usage, it appears only very rarely in literature, and then in context with very recent work only to be found on the Internet.

Undeniably, the occurrence of unhealthy stress levels in any population is on the increase. This research focuses on the way that stress impacts on the lives of young adults, particularly students, who share two common denominators; clearly identifiable unhealthy stress levels, and an academic background in which an art appreciation or an art history course was a part of their academic curriculum. The stated goal of this research is to design, develop and describe a method of stress management using the visual arts in a psycho-educational programme. The approach to this study is qualitative, with the research design

being based on the single case study with an emphasis on the trustworthiness of research findings.

The explorative nature of this research is underlined as being extremely important, with the role of the researcher as central to this type of qualitative research emphasised at every stage of the research strategy. As an important characteristic of the psycho-educational nature of this research, approaches to theory construction and the evaluative research cycle are followed by a discussion on strategies to ensure trustworthiness, including an analysis of and discourse on ethical measures.

Obviously the major focus falls on the development, application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the programme for the facilitative use of the visual arts as an intervention procedure. Emphasis is put on the idea that art does in actual fact serve a number of purposes, and that the (visual) arts do not exist merely for the sake of existing. The argument is tendered that (visual) art can serve the function of personal homeostasis via a number of varieties of visual experiences according to which art could be experienced and interpreted.

The idea is advanced that art works contain a message that is embedded in the medium of the artwork, and that interactive participation through graded exposure should be deemed a cathartic experience of value to the participant. This in turn focuses attention on the narrative discourse made possible through the interactive viewing mentioned, which in turn could be used by the participants as a journey of discovery, which is part and parcel of the facilitation suggested.

The psycho-educational theoretical model for use within the visual arts is based on a hierarchical flow of events by way of a three-tiered four-phase approach that shares some characteristics with existing art historical models. As a programme, isomorphism as a strategy of facilitation fits well into a Post-modern paradigm, as it focuses on a holistic stress management programme designed to be of benefit for the participants.

## OPSOMMING

TITEL: 'N PSIGO-OPVOEDKUNDIGE PROGRAM VIR DIE GEBRUIK VAN DIE VISUELE KUNSTE IN DIE FASILITERING VAN GESONDE STRESBESTUUR IN JONG VOLWASSENES.

Algemeen gesproke is daar niks nuuts ten opsigte van die gebruik van die kunste as metode tot fasilitering. Dit word nie net alleen in die konteks van die uitvoerende kunste waaronder dans, drama en musiek gebruik nie, maar veral ook in skilder- en beeldhoukuns, pottbakkerie, weefkuns en 'n verskeidenheid ander media- en kunsoorte. Tog maak bykans al bogenoemde staat op die persoonlike betrokkenheid van die deelnemers om aktief deel te neem aan skepping of uitvoering. Dit is grootliks musiek wat uitstaan as kunsoort wat ook slegs as reeds *voltooide* werk by wyse van passiewe betrokkenheid of 'n nie-uitvoerende modus gebruik kan word. Daar blyk tans geen soortgelyke benadering te wees ten opsigte van die visuele kunste nie, en geen program wat so iets voorstel, beskryf of ontwikkel, kon opgespoor word nie. Hierdie navorsing ondersoek juis dit: die gebruik van visuele kunswerke in fasilitering, sonder aktiewe of skeppende betrokkenheid.

Hierdie proses word beskryf as 'n isomorfiëse identifikasie met die kunswerk, en die navorsingsontwerp word gekenmerk deur die relatiewe oorspronklikheid van die voorgestelde benadering tot stresfasilitering wat in hierdie proefskrif beskryf word. Alhoewel die begrip isomorfiëse identifikasie dus nie onbekend is nie, verskyn dit redelik selde in literatuur, en dan grootliks binne konteks van heel onlangse navorsing wat slegs op die internet gevind kan word.

Die toename in die stresvlakke van die meeste gemeenskappe is 'n gegewe, en hierdie navorsing fokus veral op die impak wat stres op die lewens van jong volwassenes, spesifiek studente kan hê. Hierdie studente het twee dinge in met mekaar in gemeen; duidelik identifiseerbare ongesonde stresvlakke, en 'n akademiese agtergrond waarin kunswaardering of 'n kursus in kunsgeskiedenis 'n deel van hul kurrikulum was. Die gestelde doelwit met hierdie navorsing is die ontwerp, ontwikkeling en beskrywing van 'n metode van streshantering aan

die hand van die visuele kunste in 'n psigo-opvoedkundige program. Die benadering tot hierdie navorsing is kwalitatief van aard, en die navorsingsontwerp word gebaseer op die enkelgevalstudie met beklemtoning van die vertrouenswaardigheid van navorsingsbevindinge. Deur middel van die verskillende stadia van metodologiese verduideliking, beskrywing van gebruikte strategieë en veldwerkanalise, word die verkennende aard van die navorsing as van besondere belang beklemtoon. Hierin word die rol van die navorser as sentraal tot hierdie tipe kwalitatiewe navorsing en ten opsigte van elke stap van die navorsing sterk beklemtoon.

As 'n belangrike kenmerk van die psigo-opvoedkundige aard van hierdie navorsing, word benaderings tot teoriebou en die evaluatiewe navorsingsiklus gevolg deur 'n bespreking van strategieë om vertrouenswaardigheid te verseker. Dit sluit ook 'n beskrywing en bespreking van etiese maatreëls in.

Uiteraard val die hoofokus van hierdie navorsing op die ontwikkeling, toepassing, analise, interpretasie en evaluasie van die program. Klem word geplaas op die funksionaliteit wat kuns mag bevat, en dat een so 'n funksie die taak kan verrig om persoonlike homeostase te bevorder. Dit gebeur deur gebruik te maak van 'n verskeidenheid wyses waarvolgens kuns ervaar of geïnterpreteer kan word. Daar word gestel dat kunswerke inhoudelik boodskappe kan bevat wat toelaat dat interaktiewe deelname met die kunswerk genuanseerde blootstelling moontlik maak, en wat 'n katarsis-belewing in die deelnemer kan beïnvloed. Deur middel van die narratiewe diskoers rondom die kunswerk kan die deelnemer hierdie ervaring benut as 'n ontdekkingsreis in die proses van die fasilitering.

Die psigo-opvoedkundige aard van die teoretiese model is gebaseer op 'n hiërargiese vloei van sake deur middel van 'n drie-vlak vier-fase benadering wat sekere eienskappe met ander kunsgeskiedkundige modelle deel. As program skakel 'n isomorfiëse benadering baie goed in by 'n Postmodernistiese paradigma, aangesien dit steun op 'n holistiese stresbestuursprogram wat ontwerp is om vir die deelnemers van waarde te wees.