

EUROPE

Ensuring Unity and Respect as Outcomes for People of Europe



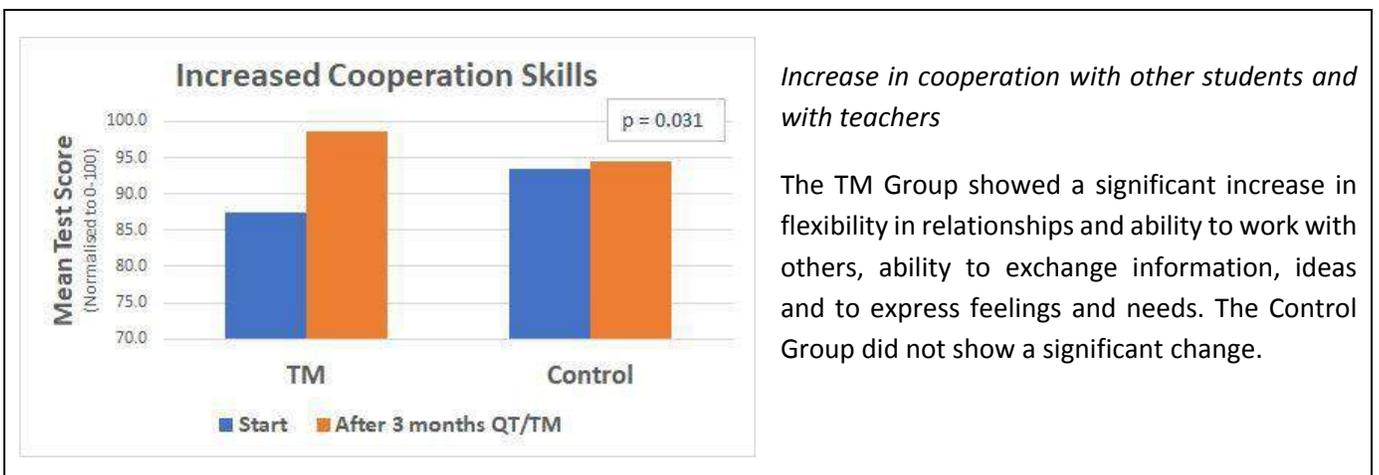
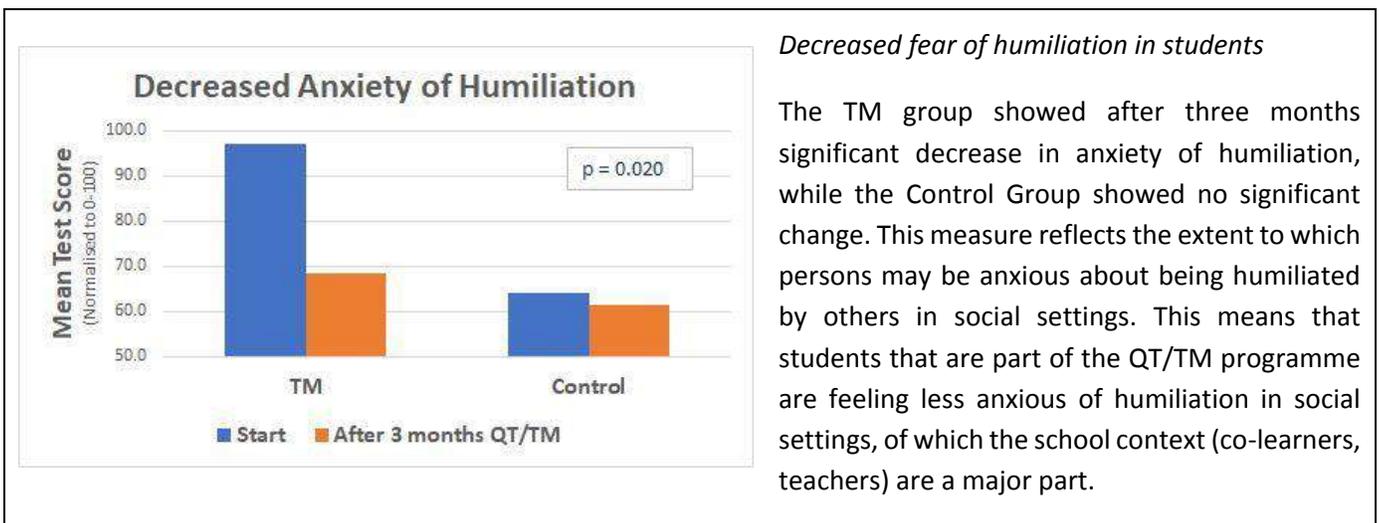
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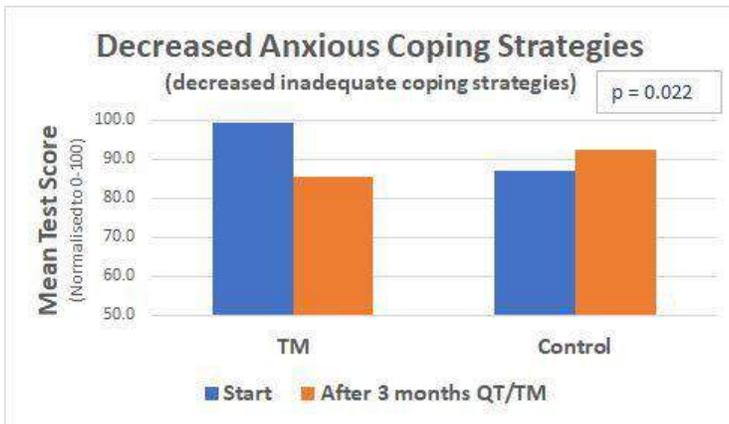
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RESULTS FOR STUDENTS

From all psychological measures considered in our study, encompassing stress, anxiety, resilience, satisfaction with life, and coping strategies, results seem to be focused on three dimensions. Students seem to be less anxious about being humiliated, using less anxious coping strategies and more resilient concerning their cooperation skills. Also, the qualitative assessment of the TM's impact corroborates the quantitative results: students refer to be calmer, less anxious and with more available personal resources to manage negative affects. They feel TM allows them to be more focus and relate it to an improvement of school achievement. These results seem to be validated by the previous described studies (eg. Nidich et al., 2009; Rosaen & Benn, 2006). In addition, our study accounted for frequency of meditation, which allowed us to perceive a tendency of increased benefits along the increase of meditation frequency.

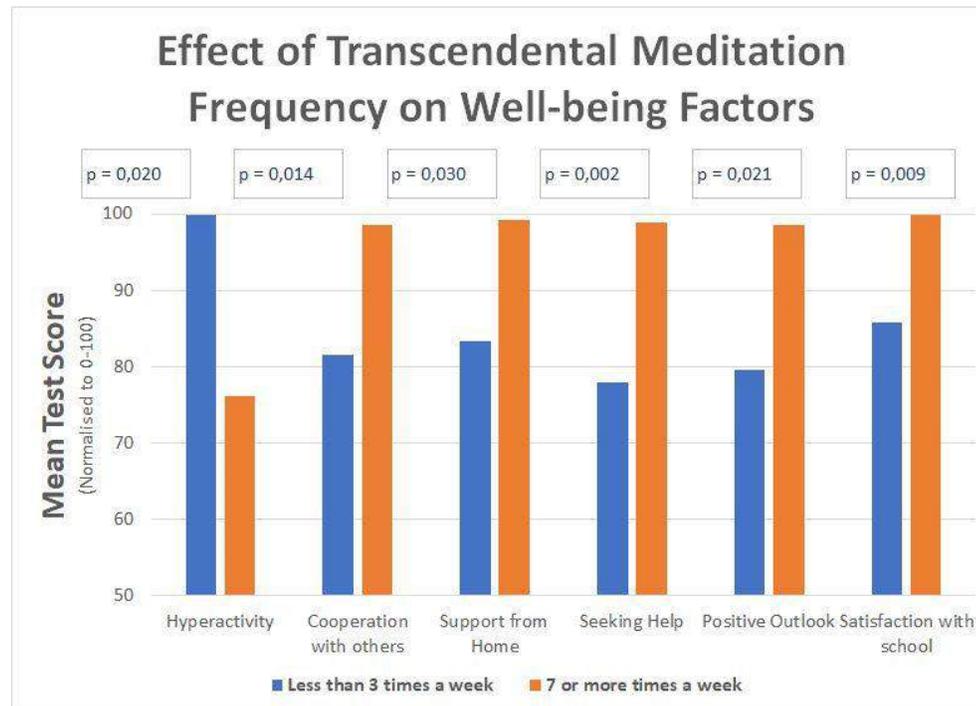
The study analysed differences of psychological indicators between the control and experimental group, before and after the implementation of Transcendental Meditation. The experimental group presented a statistically significant difference. Here below some of the results from the psychological tests:





Increase in cooperation with other students and with teachers

The TM group decreases their tendency to adopt anxious coping, whilst control group increases their tendency (see figure 3). Anxious coping occurs when persons adopt strategies to avoid situations perceived as risk or dangerous, causing stress and anxiety.



Clear tendency of improvement on psychological indicators along the increase of Transcendental Meditation frequency.

Although, it was not a prime objective to evaluate how the frequency of meditation influences on the psychological indicators, we used the nominal question “How many times did you meditate in the last week?” to analyse that. Results

show a clear tendency of improvement on psychological indicators along the increase of mediation frequency.

What we can say is that the EUROPE project study has shown that the QT/TM programme helps people to be become more positive, happier and with a better outlook on life. In general well-being increases significantly. As elaborated in deliverable D.6.7 (chapter 1), these changes are indeed important factors (a) in preventing people to slide away to extremism and terrorism, and (b) in implementing an inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, these values help to develop and grow values opposite to radicalisation risk factors identified by Borum (2004) and Horgan (2008) such as alienation from society,

victimization, the feeling of being unjustly treated, no moral standards or compassion with others, dissatisfaction with the society and the feeling that more violent action is needed to change things.

A more comprehensive analysis of the results for students in relation to the selected objectives is contained in D.5.5 and in D6.7 (chapter4)

These results are also confirmed by the qualitative evidence gathered during the 2 years of the project, and reported in this section, that indicates how the EUROPE project is addressing the general and the chosen specific objectives of the call. These qualitative evidence was gathered through a) interviews done in the context of a 2/3 minutes video in the Algarve school in Portugal, participating in the EUROPE project and applying the QT/TM programme within its setting that includes many students coming from disadvantaged background and troubled families, students often aggressive and with behavioural problems; b) testimony of the principal and head teacher of the welcome schools for migrants and video of very difficult participating schools in Sweden; c) written experiences of participants from drop-out schools in the Netherlands.

As an example, below are some excerpts of the video mentioned earlier, with testimonials of students:

Students

Students from Algarve (PT) participating in the QT/TM programme

“Before I was a nervous kid, I used to insult my classmates and defy them. But since I started meditating, it seems I started calming down. I am like another person, I feel more relaxed, more free. I look at things with more clarity, with different eyes. I have learned a lot”

“I had very low self-esteem and was very negative. I was always putting myself down. Fortunately, meditation appeared in my life and everything changed completely. I no longer feel nervous during exams and it is easier for me to learn. Now, when I do an exam I no longer feel that fear of making mistakes because I know I can do it right”

Student of a welcome school for migrants, arrived in Sweden shortly before the EUROPE project started

“...with this programme I can remove all the negative energy and [be able to] study to take time with myself, ... I can think about what I’m going to do and what I’m going to be in the future (...) The great effect it has on me, in my life (...) without Quiet Time I could not learn Swedish language and I could not go to high school ... but now I’m in high school, I’m studying IT programme, computer science, and I’m thankful that I found out about Quiet Time and I’m thanking our principal and our leader and I’m saying thank you very much, (...) Thank you!

From students in the drop out school in the Netherlands

“I have more energy, concentration has improved, I feel less chaos in my head—even with occasional meditating I feel the effects”

“I have more interest in school now”

“I sleep better, feel more relaxed, feel less nervous”

OVERALL SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

From the point of view of the **overall school atmosphere**, teachers report that:

Principal of a welcome school for migrants in Sweden

The experience is confirmed by the speech of the principal and coordinating teacher at the Welcome school in Sweden that participated in the EUROPE project. This speech done at the final conference of the EUROPE project in Brussels, is available in the EUROPE project website¹

*“...last year we had 80 students in this school and this year we have 60, **and almost all of these students continue to the next level of education, and I would say, mostly because of TM**, because when they arrived to our school (...) they didn't know what to do, they were agitated, stressed and feeling sorry about coming to Sweden without the parents, and there was a lot of violence and discussion, it was difficult to work sometimes...but when we started with TM the students became calmer and the whole school environment became much much calmer and even the teachers became calmer”*

In the Portuguese video, the principal of the schools, management team and the teachers report that:

“Some classes that were very busy and the students talked too loud. Now my colleagues say that they are more at peace, they listen to the teacher in a different kind of way, they listen to them. And although you don't have all the kids practicing, the other ones are in silence, they are still quiet, they respect the others.”

“With the technique, I feel the adults and the kids more soft, more happy and with a greater capacity to interact with each other.”

“This year the school received a lot of awards. This was a good year because we are calmer, and more focused even in times of stress. Our results improved in every aspect, in every school level. This academic year we can consider it was a very positive year because the school environment improved.”

Teachers from drop-out school in the Netherlands report:

“I see the positive changes from the inside, especially emotions of students. e.g. less discussion, more cooperative behaviour”

¹ <https://europe-project.org/results/#finalConference>

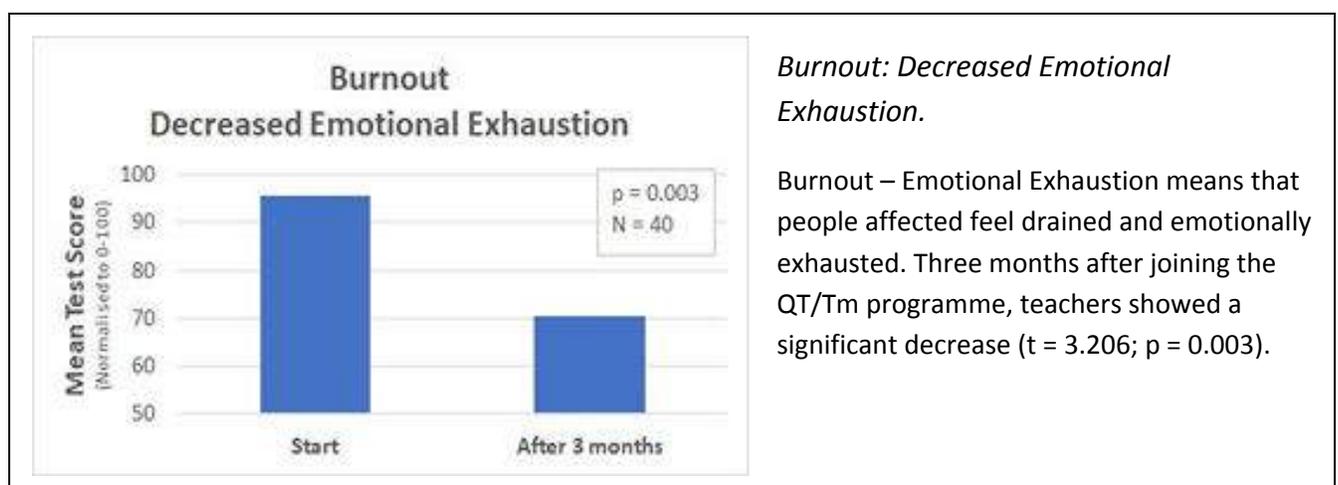
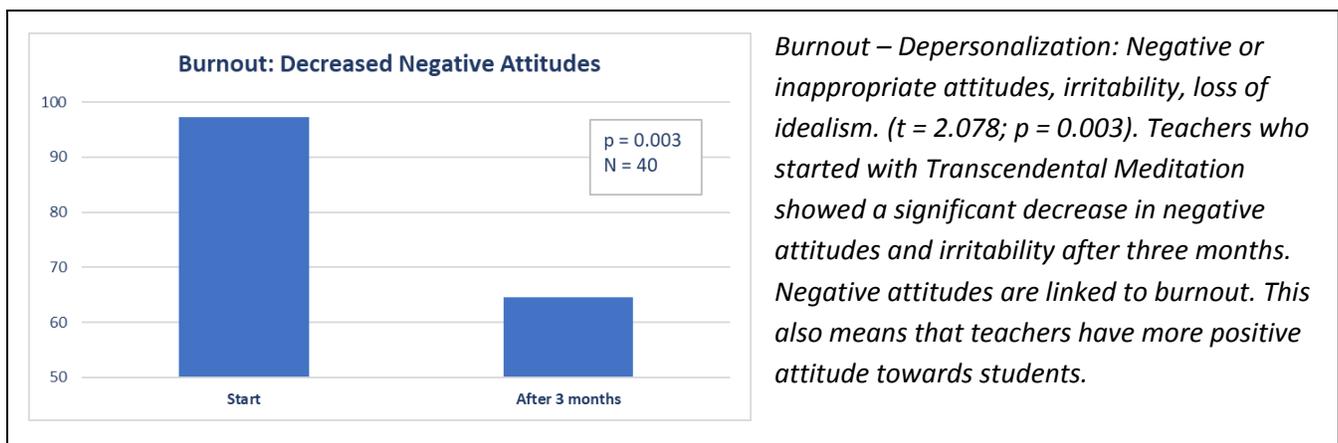
“Students feel more cohesion in the group... this has a positive effect on the school atmosphere”.

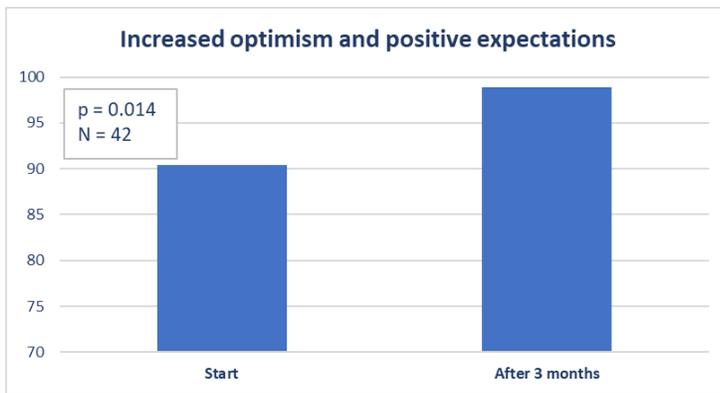
RESULTS FOR TEACHERS

In preventing violent radicalisation and promoting intercultural understanding and active citizenship (a general objective of the call), it is crucial to support teachers and educators in handling conflicts and dealing with diversity (a specific objective of the call).

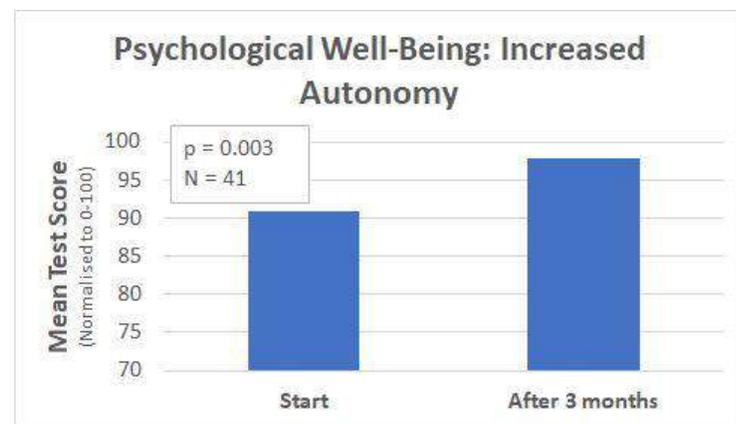
If we look at the totality of the results of the quantitative and qualitative study for teachers conducted in the EUROPE project, QT/TM has shown to provide significant contribution on decreasing of stress, negative affects and burnout in school teachers, and simultaneously on increasing job satisfaction, optimism, positive affects and well-being. (see D.5.6 and D.6.7 chapter 4)

Here below some of the results from the teachers’ psychological tests.





Optimism: Positive expectations ($t = -2.557$; $p = 0.014$). Teachers who started with Transcendental Meditation showed after three months a significant increase in positive expectations. This is related to a better outlook on life and higher self-motivation.



Psychological Well-being: increased autonomy.

Teachers who started with Transcendental Meditation viewed themselves to be living in accord with their own personal convictions ($t = -3.265$; $p = 0.003$).

The current study supports the premise that TM is a technique to achieve well-being among students and teachers, which, according to literature, could be a pathway to positive school climate.

Here some personal experiences of Principals and Teachers participating in the EUROPE project in Portugal, Sweden and Holland showing how QT/TM support them in their challenge of dealing with the increasing diverse learning environment.

From the principal of the welcome centre in Sweden

*"It's difficult to work with these kind of students because they have all kind of languages, different kind of religion (...) some of them come with parents and some without parents ... some of them know they will stay in Sweden and some of them they don't know ... we can send them back to their own country ... so they are really worried about the future ... when we work in this kind of group there is a lot of problem, (...) **we work with the knowledge, but we need to work with the Humans... we need to develop the heart, the feeling, the emotions, so when TM was introduced in our school it became a big change in how we worked with the students**"*

Principal and teachers from the participating school in Algarve, Portugal

“I can more easily reach out to the students. I felt from them a much more positive reaction”

“I see it’s a good project because in this society of noises we need some instruments that help everyone to stop. Silence and meditation are hugely, hugely important, even in a school context. First to be deeply connected, first to be at peace within. That is the first step to be at peace with everyone”

*“We have **an innovative project in which we believe**. It was a powerful tool that changes the behaviour and attitude of people”*

Principal of a participating school (for difficult children) in the Netherlands (email to all the teachers):

“I just started TM ... I started with scepticism and I had no affinity with it but after all I did not do this for myself but to investigate whether we can use this method for the students we teach at school and that are usually from troubled situations. I have practiced now for 4 days ... I can give much more attention to people, I have more energy, I can cope better. The main effect is that I have the feeling that my thinking is clearer which makes me feel more rested and peaceful ... I would like to have others experience this, especially our students and the teachers “

In addition, already in the first year of the project some quantitative data were obtained from a self-assessment of teachers in Portugal participating in the project² and receiving the training in TM as part of their Continuous Professional Development (P5-P10) shows very good marks: 93% rated it good to excellent. Very interesting is that despite the non-conventional approach of the QT/TM programme, 98% of the respondents recognized the “direct scientific or pedagogical relationship with professional practice”.

EXPERIENCES WITH PARENTS

The QT/TM programme helps also to support the parents whose positive connection with the schools influences children’s attitudes and achievements in education. Parents are accurately informed about the programme and strongly engaged in QT/TM. Without a minimum support of the parents, the project cannot achieve its objectives. Moreover, it is well known that the home situation has a significant influence on how students feel, think, and perform at school. If parents are less stressed, anxious, and more tolerant, then this will reflect positively on their children.

The parent association APEJAA (P9) contributed in promoting the EUROPE project to new principals of new schools and new parents in the Aveiro area of Portugal but also stimulating the creation and the involvement of new parent association in the project. Through their activity they contributed therefore to the organization of many trainings of

² <http://bit.ly/2Dejb2t>

teachers and parents. The parent association of the implementing School in Algarve is also very active in the region. This shows the Strong role of parents in bringing innovation in Education. Parents have a strong involvement in the EUROPE project and have a key role for the success of the programme in the schools and its link with the territory.

The support of parents is exemplified by the following testimonials:

"An extraordinary initiative that will have to be enlarged to the most number of schools possible, and essential for the full development of our children"

"It is an experience that has to be spread to all the education community, especially to the children"

And From a parent from a School in Aveiro

"This project is a sign of hope in a new consciousness and serenity, in our modern era, increasingly agitated. Congratulations on the initiative and the quality of the training. THANK YOU for the opportunity! I am very pleasantly surprised and grateful. It would be fundamental for the development of the personality of our children and young people if they could enjoy Transcendental Meditation as naturally integrated in their school life!! It would change their life and their future! I am counting on your executive capacity for this! "

Other testimonials with parents(in Portuguese) can be found at the blog page of APEJAA

<http://bit.ly/2DulChj>

and at the results page of the EUROPE project website (with translation)

<https://europe-project.org/results/>

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