

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ

Colegio de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming
Proyecto de Investigación

Mario Alejandro Fegan Espinosa

Psicología

Trabajo de titulación presentado como requisito
para la obtención del título de
Licenciado en Psicología

Quito, 18 de diciembre de 2015

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ
COLEGIO DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y HUMANIDADES

**HOJA DE CALIFICACIÓN
DE TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN**

Therapeutic Applications of Lucid Dreaming

Mario Alejandro Fegan Espinosa

Calificación:

Nombre del profesor, Título académico

Sonja Embree, PhD.

Firma del profesor

Quito, 18 de diciembre de 2015

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Firma del estudiante: _____

Nombres y apellidos: Mario Alejandro Fegan Espinosa

Código: 00101887

Cédula de Identidad: 1712755782

Lugar y fecha: Quito, diciembre de 2015

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio es explorar las posibles aplicaciones terapéuticas de los sueños lúcidos y su rol en el proceso de autorrealización como fue propuesto por Abraham Maslow (1968). ¿Son los sueños lúcidos útiles en el proceso de autorrealización y, cuáles son algunas de las posibles aplicaciones terapéuticas para esta práctica? Para profundizar en estas interrogantes propongo un estudio de panel compuesto por 10 participantes (5 hombres y 5 mujeres), todos ellos soñantes lúcidos. Los participantes serán seguidos durante un año por medio de entrevistas mensuales para evaluar su progreso con dificultades psicológicas personales. Se esperan resultados positivos en el estado de salud mental general de los participantes así como un progreso en su propio proceso de autodescubrimiento y autorrealización. Se espera que este estudio sienta las bases para futuras investigaciones sobre los enfoques terapéuticos de los sueños lúcidos.

Palabras clave: Sueños lúcidos, terapia, autorrealización, autodescubrimiento, estudio de panel, entrevistas, salud psicológica.. .

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is to explore the possible therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming and its role in the process of self-actualization as proposed by Abraham Maslow (1968). Is lucid dreaming helpful in the process of self-actualization and, what are some of the possible therapeutic applications for this practice? To find some insight on these questions I propose a panel study composed of 10 participants (5 males and 5 females), all of them lucid dreamers. They will be followed during 1 year through monthly interviews in order to evaluate their progress with personal psychological difficulties. Positive results in the general psychological health of the participants are expected as well as progress in their own process of self-discovery and self-actualization. It is expected that this study will lay the groundwork for future research on the therapeutic approaches of lucid dreaming.

Key words: Lucid dreaming, therapy, self-actualization, self-discovery, panel study, interviews, psychological health.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
A brief history of lucid dreaming.....	11
Lucid dreaming in non-Western societies	13
Lucid dreaming and self-actualization	15
Lucid dreaming therapeutic applications.....	18
METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN	21
Participants.....	21
Recruitment of the participants.....	21
Study design	22
Data analysis.....	24
Ethics	24
DATA ANALYSIS	26
Anticipated results	26
Discussion.....	27
CONCLUSIONS	29
Limitations.....	29
Future Research	29
REFERENCES	31
APPENDIX A: Advertisement.....	34
APPENDIX B: Ethics	34
APPENDIX C: Instruments.....	44

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of humanity dreams have been a very important part of our lives, I'd say even more than what many people in western society would like to agree. Dreams are more important in some cultures than in others. Tribal, traditional cultures for instance, tend to pay more attention to their dreams than western, technologically developed societies. In this light, it is interesting to notice that the Bible, the elemental book of western religious tradition is filled with accounts of dreams of all sorts. Prophetic dreams, spiritual dreams, dreams of angels and other apparitions. In the other hand, it's extremely paradoxical to find out that the scientific method that became one of the basis of our materialist and scientific world view was inspired by a series of dreams that Descartes had involving an angel. This is a fact poorly known and in the end, the same Cartesian world view in which western thought developed, regarded dreams as no more than curiosities in the best of cases, or just useless byproducts of brain functions. With the revolution of psychoanalysis, dreams regained their importance in the field of psychiatry and later on, the theories of Carl Gustav Jung took the study of dreams to a deeper level.

Nowadays most of the schools of psychology agree in that dreams are important or at least that the process of dreaming is. However, I believe that we still have much to discover regarding dreams. We have been dreaming since we are human (and probably before that already) but we have scientifically studied dreams for no more than a century and there's still a lot to explain about them.

If this is true for dreaming, then what to say about lucid dreaming? This phenomenon has been studied in laboratories for only four decades as to now (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990) and it's potentials in the field of psychology seem very promising to say the least.

Lucid dreaming, sometimes also called conscious dreaming, is described as the phenomenon in which the dreamer suddenly or progressively realizes that he/she is dreaming (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). This awareness of the dream state opens up a myriad of possibilities that include almost complete control over the dream environment, conscious interaction with dream characters, creation of objects and figures, free travel and exploration, among many other possible scenarios.

The scientific comprehension and study of this phenomenon is just taking its first steps. In the modern scientific community, lucid dreaming was acknowledged as a real phenomenon only in the 1970's (Gackenbach & LaBerge, 1988). Before this there were only personal anecdotes and old accounts of philosophers and occultists that versed upon the subject of awakening within a dream. In spite of this, historical evidence shows that lucid dreams are known to humanity since at least 1000 BCE where the first references to this subject appear in the Upanishads (ancient Sanskrit texts of the Hindu tradition) (Bulkeley, 1995). Throughout history, many relevant thinkers in the like of Aristotle and Nietzsche have mentioned the phenomenon of lucid dreaming in their writings, most of the time referring to personal experiences (Hurd, 2008). In the East, there are also whole religious and esoteric traditions that rely heavily in the practice of lucid dreaming (Rinpoche, 2004).

Modern research of lucid dreaming has shown that there is a considerable number of people that experience lucid dreaming naturally and spontaneously throughout their lives (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). The majority of people, however, doesn't experience this kind of dreams without previous training. Good news is that lucid dreaming can be learned by almost anyone. It is in fact relatively easy to learn for the average person (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). Once in the path of lucid dreaming, this ability can be mastered to the

point of attaining almost total dream control and free will every time the dreamer so desires. With all this potential, the practice of lucid dreaming can easily become a very efficient and safe way of self-exploration and even self-healing at deep levels of the psyche.

I strongly believe that the conscious exploration of the dream world has many surprises awaiting to be discovered and, most important, many practical applications that could revolutionize the field of psychology. Once, the renowned transpersonal psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, said that psychedelic substances such as LSD or mescaline would be for psychology what the microscope is to biology or the telescope to astronomy (Grof, 1992). The work with psychedelics has resulted in many astonishing findings and applications but it also raised many concerns about the safety of these substances and their possible adverse effects in many individuals to the point that Grof himself stopped working with LSD and developed holotropic breathing. In the other hand, there have not been any considerable adverse effects or issues reported by lucid dreamers (Waggoner, 2008). This practice is very safe and could be used by almost anyone, I dare to say that with the same depth of access to the unconscious that psychedelics offer.

Considering the short age of this field of study there are many questions in relation to the possible applications of lucid dreaming. Can they help managing anxiety or depression? Is it possible to practice and improve skills while dreaming? Can you learn in a dream? Can lucid dreaming boost self-esteem? Are they useful for people with recurrent nightmares? Patients with traumas, PTSD or phobias? Are they useful as a means of self-exploration? These are just some of the questions that arise about the possible applications of lucid dreaming. The aim of this study is to explore some of these possibilities through the experiences of the participants and hopefully lay the groundwork for future, more specific,

research in the themes that might arise from this investigation. The research question of this study is the following: Is lucid dreaming helpful in the process of self-actualization and, what are some of the possible therapeutic applications for this practice?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section contains a review of what I consider the most relevant subthemes of lucid dreaming research that are related to this study. The first subtheme comprehends a brief overview of the history of lucid dreaming since the dawn of mankind to the beginning of the scientific research on this topic. The next subtheme deals with lucid dreaming in non-western societies and will focus primarily in the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and in the shamanic practices of tribal societies. Following this I will make a review of the relation between lucid dreaming and the humanistic concept of self-actualization and, finally, the current therapeutic approaches that deal with lucid dreaming.

A brief history of lucid dreams

Lucid dreaming was acknowledged as a real phenomenon by science in the second half of the XX century. More precisely it was first demonstrated in a laboratory in 1981 (LaBerge, 1990). Before this, most scientists were reluctant to believe that it was even possible to attain any level of consciousness within a dream. Nowadays we know that lucid dreaming is actually much more common than what was thought and that a considerable percentage of people experience this sort of dreams in a natural, spontaneous way. According to some studies the percentage of people who report having at least one lucid dreaming experience in some point of their lives ascends to 50% (Gackenbach & LaBerge, 1988).

It is very likely that human beings have been experiencing lucid dreams in both spontaneous and self-induced ways since the dawn of mankind (Hurd, 2008). Nowadays, the shamans of various native traditions use lucid dreams on a regular basis as another tool to

enter the spiritual realms (Hurd & Bulkeley, 2014). This was probably the same way many thousands of years ago when the first shamans started to get in touch with the “other world” by entering modified states of consciousness. There is evidence of shamanic practices in rock art dating as back as the Paleolithic (Lewis-Williams, 1996).

The first written mention of lucid dreaming dates from before 1000 B.C and can be found in the *Upanishads*, ancient religious texts of India (Bulkeley, 1995). It was a practice already known and used by the first Vedic priests. It is also present in the *Vigyan Bhairav Tantra*, an ancient esoteric text of the Kashmir Shivaism tradition containing a series of meditation methods including the practice of lucid dreaming (Bulkeley, 1995).

This ancient Indian spiritual practices of lucid dreaming were eventually transmitted to the region of Tibet through the early expansion of Buddhism. Tibetans, on the other hand, already had a very old tradition of lucid dreaming. Shamans of the *Bön* tradition (a form of native animistic shamanism) had already been using lucid dreams as part of their shamanic repertoire for thousands of years (Rinpoche, 2004).

The history of lucid dreaming in the West is also as old as western civilization. The Greek philosophers were very interested in the subject of dreams. Among them, Aristotle was the first to make a clear reference to this phenomenon in his treaty “On Dreams” dating from the 350 B.C (Hunt, 1991). Later on in Western history, the first anecdotal register of a lucid dream was made by St. Augustine in the fifth century (Hurd, 2008). In the Muslim world, there are accounts of Sufi mystics that were concerned with dream control and recommended it as a healthy practice (Walsh & Vaughn, 1992).

During the Middle Ages in the Christian Europe, the experience of lucid dreams and other dream-related phenomenon such as sleep paralysis, nocturnal emissions and nightmares were associated with demonic entities such as incubi and succubae and were, therefor, repressed by the Church alongside with witchcraft and pagan traditions (Bulkeley, 1995).

The Enlightenment marked a revival in the field of dream exploration. Many intellectuals started to become interested in the dream world and began exploring their own dreams, becoming the first oneironauts (travelers/explorers of the dream world). Among them were Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Reid and René Descartes, the father of the scientific method (Bulkeley, 1995). More recently in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th many mystics and occultists started their experimentation with lucid dreams including Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo and Aleister Crowley (Walsh & Vaughn, 1992).

The onset of the 20th century marked the beginning of the scientific interest in dreams and, in some cases, lucid dreams. Later on in this literature review, in the subtheme called “Lucid dreaming and scientific research” I will discuss the modern approaches of psychology and psychiatry concerning this phenomenon from Sigmund Freud to the modern researchers and the scientific proof that lucid dreaming is real.

Lucid dreaming in non-Western societies

Even though lucid dreams were already known in ancient Greece, their influence and importance in western society has been rather weak throughout history. It wasn't until the second half of the 20th century that lucid dreams became of interest for some sectors of the counter-culture that reached its peak with the hippie revolution in the late 60's, as part of a wider movement defined by Terence McKenna (1992) as the "Archaic Revival". This cultural phenomenon is defined as a modern reversion of archaic values and is characterized by practices such as psychedelic use, rave culture, eastern spirituality, neo-shamanic practices, sexual permissiveness, tattooing, among many others (McKenna, 1992).

For many westerners their first contact with the world of lucid dreaming came through the polemic writings of Carlos Castaneda (1968) who introduced a shamanic and magical worldview, portrayed in the character of Don Juan Matus, to the Western cultural landscape. Among the many practices (most of which were focused in the use of psychedelic plants) referred to Castaneda by Don Juan, he mentions the "art of dreaming" as the capacity of being conscious while dreaming and controlling the content of the dream (Castaneda, 1993). Even though many scholars regard Castaneda's work as sheer fiction (Hurd, 2008), their influence in modern consciousness and spirituality is out of question.

According to Harry Hunt (1991) in his essay "The Multiplicity of Dreams", lucid dreaming has been, and still is, a core shamanic practice in different tribal societies all around the world. Dreams and visions are a central part of shamanism and trained shamans are often capable of willingly inducing such states. There is a strong lucidity component in the way shamans induce the experience of having sacred dreams or revelations, most of the time remaining conscious throughout this experiences (Hunt, 1989).

Anthropologist Josep M. Fericgla (1994) suggests that the Shuar people of the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle experience a cognitive continuum between wakefulness and the dream world. This means that most of the time they don't clearly differentiate the events and experiences of waking life from those of their dreams and they do not conceive the dream as something separate from reality as we do. This is probably due to the fact that they are able to experience their dream lives in a conscious or, at least, partially conscious way (Fericgla, 1994).

As it was mentioned in the previous section, the most sophisticated lucid dreaming spiritual practices developed in ancient India at least 3000 years ago and subsequently became part of different tantric Buddhist traditions. This teachings eventually found their way into Tibet where they merged with the native *Bön* religion giving birth to different practices that are commonly known under the name of "Dream Yoga" (Tibetan: Milam), and are part of a wider Tibetan Buddhist tradition called Dzogchen (Rinpoche, 2004).

The practice of Dream Yoga is traditionally transmitted in a "master to disciple" manner after a proper initiation, being in fact a highly secretive and esoteric practice of which many aspects are not clear to us westerners. One of the objectives of this practice is to acknowledge the illusory nature (*maya*) of the dream reality and compare it to the illusory nature of physical reality (Rinpoche, 2004). Lucid dreaming, in this context, is also a powerful tool to bring the practice of meditation to the dream state. The dream yoga initiate is able to consciously meditate while sleeping. Advanced dream yoga practitioners claim to be able to manipulate the dream reality at their will and use it sometimes to project images of *Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakinis* and other deities (Rinpoche, 2004).

Lucid dreaming and self-actualization

Self-actualization is a term used, with a similar meaning, in various psychological theories which mainly belong to the field of humanistic psychology. The term was coined by psychiatrist Kurt Goldstein (Francis & Kristonis, 2006) and was deeply elaborated by Abraham Maslow (1968) in the context of his hierarchy of needs theory.

Self-actualization is conceived as the optimal psychological condition for mankind and can only be achieved by an individual who has previously satisfied all the basic physiological and psychological needs proposed by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs pyramid (Chang & Paige, 1991). These are in ascendant order: physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem and, finally, self-actualization (Maslow, 1968).

The definition of self-actualization is related with the discovering and fulfilment of the individual's personal potential. The tendency for the individual to become actualized in his/her own potential and to become a better version of his/herself, exploring different aspects of the self that were previously unknown and expressing all the innate capacities (Maslow, 1968). In this sense, self-actualization can be seen as similar to other words and concepts used to define the same desire such as self-development, personal-development, self-realization, personal growth and self-exploration. According to Maslow (1968), self-actualization is not a basic need (in fact most humans go through their lives without ever fully achieving self-actualization) but rather a higher, transcendental meta-need (Chang & Paige, 1991).

This concept, under different names and slightly different definitions is present in most humanistic approaches and in the Human Potential Movement (Francis & Kristonis, 2006). A similar idea can be found in Jung's concept of individuation. Interestingly, many of

the characteristics of the self-actualized individual proposed by Maslow, and independently by Carl Rogers (1961), are considered to be elemental in the Eastern philosophies of Chinese Taoism and Zen Buddhism (Chang & Paige, 1991).

Now let's explore the relation of lucid dreaming and self-actualization. In the beginning of psychological dream research, Freud (1900) already considered dreams to be the most direct path to the unconscious. Lucid dreaming, in this light, becomes an excellent tool to consciously interact with the unconscious projections that are presented in dreams (Tholey, 2012). Among the advantages of lucid dreaming is the possibility of confronting and establishing a dialogue with threatening dream figures which provide important information. In a state of lucidity, the dreamer is able to recognize the present personal dynamics and their etiology (Tholey, 2012). Also, through an appropriate activity of the dream ego, a change in the personality structure of the individual is possible (Tholey, 2012).

According to the investigations of Paul Tholey (2012) this conscious interaction with dream figures is particularly helpful in self-knowledge, self-healing and self-actualization. LaBerge and Rheingold (1990) also state that lucid dreaming is a very useful approach for achieving self-knowledge and self-actualization. Realizing that the dream ego is not the true identity of the Self proves to be very useful for changing aspects of the waking ego and stop identifying with it as one's true identity (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). This facilitates the process of changing negative behavior patterns in waking life and dysfunctional aspects of personality, achieving a better comprehension of the true Self (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990).

In understanding the potential of lucid dreaming as a tool for self-actualization, it is also relevant to notice that lucid dreaming has a millenary history of use as a spiritual practice in Eastern traditions (with the ultimate goal of achieving enlightenment) as well as

in shamanic traditions all over the world as a means to get in touch with the spiritual world. Such prolonged history of use by many different cultures is, in my view, a clear indicator of lucid dreaming's potential for self-development and spiritual work.

Lucid dreaming therapeutic applications

In recent years, lucid dreaming has progressively entered the landscape of mainstream scientific research. Since the scientific demonstration of this phenomenon, many researchers have become interested in the possible therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming. Even though this is a very young field of study there is already promising evidence for the successful application of lucid dreams with therapeutic ends.

This therapeutic approach has been especially successful in the treatment of recurrent nightmares and, by extension, of PTSD given the relevance of the nightmare component in this disorder (Gavie & Revonsuo, 2010). Lucid dreaming therapy (LDT) shows very promising results for the treatment of chronic nightmares (Spoormaker & van den Bout, 2006). However, it is noted by the researchers that this therapeutic approach is in need of substantial future exploration and validation (Gavie & Revonsuo, 2010). More studies should be conducted utilizing larger samples and the intensity and length of the lucidity intervention should also be increased (Gavie & Revonsuo, 2010).

There is also evidence that lucid dreaming could be associated with a greater overall mental health. Pioneer of lucid dreaming research, Stephen LaBerge (1990) reports an increased level of self-confidence, well-being and overall quality of life as a result of the vast opportunities for living different experiences that lucid dreams provide. Gackenbach &

Bosveld (1991) claim a significant association between lucid dreaming frequency and both physical and mental health.

In a study conducted in Vienna by Doll, Gittler & Holzinger (2009) volunteers were given surveys measuring overall mental health, namely the Trier Persönlichkeitsfragebogen. The research concluded that frequent lucid dreamers showed significantly better mental health than non-lucid dreamers (Doll et. al., 2009).

The research of Paul Tholey (2012) on the therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming suggests that this practice can also be useful for the resolution of more complex psychological conflicts. One of the most successful ways of resolving psychological conflicts in the context of lucid dreams is through the conscious interaction with dream figures, especially when they seem threatening to the dreamer in some way. According to the theory developed by Tholey, intrapsychic and psychosocial conflicts are very often expressed in the form of threats from a hostile dream figure (Tholey, 2012). The conscious reconciliation with this dream figure, on the other hand, can result in a resolution of the conflict (Tholey, 2012).

Transcending the field of therapeutic applications, there is also some evidence that lucid dreaming might be useful for the practice, or even for the development of motor skills. In his article, Applications of Lucid Dreaming in Sports, Paul Tholey (1990) reviews different case studies in which several athletes report significant achievements in their particular disciplines through the use lucid dreaming. These are some of the thesis proposed by Tholey (1990) regarding this reports: Sensory-motor skills that have already been mastered can be further refined by using lucid dreaming (Tholey 1990). New sensory-motor skills can be learned using lucid dreaming (Tholey, 1990). Actions and movements can be perfected by test-runs performed in lucid dreams (Tholey, 1990).

The implications of these statements, if true, can be of the most relevant interest for the field of psychology. The concept that it is possible to learn new skills in dreams would revolutionize our ideas about learning and the practical applications of dreams. It occurs to me that that this potential for learning in lucid dreams might not be limited to sensory-motor skills but could perhaps include intellectual processes. This is indeed a fascinating field of research for future studies.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN

. This study has the main objective of exploring the therapeutic benefits of lucid dreaming and its potential for personal development and self-actualization. It is, therefore, a pilot and exploratory study that will not focus in any particular aspect of lucid dreaming applications. It will provide a general insight into the various topics that will probably arise and that might be subject of further investigation.

Participants

This study will comprise of 10 participants. 5 males and 5 females to assure a proportional representation of both genres. The participants will be middle-class university students with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years. Even though this is not a representative sample of the Ecuadorian population, this study is exploratory and qualitative and, therefore, is not concerned with demographic representation at this point.

The only pre-requisite for taking part in this study will be to be an avid lucid dreamer and, furthermore, to have previously achieved an intermediate or advanced level of dream control. This will be determined in the selection process.

Recruitment of participants

The first step for the recruitment of participants will take place through advertising posters, flyers and emails that will be distributed in the main universities of Quito. These informative media will include contact information so the people who are interested will be able to reach back. A monetary reward will be offered. The email and poster will also provide information for a meeting that will be held at a specific date in the USFQ University.

During this meeting an opened conference on lucid dreaming will be presented and later on the same day the candidates for the study will be personally interviewed. It is expected to have around 30 candidates in this stage of the recruitment process.

This first recruitment interview will be used in order to determine whether the applicants are lucid dreamers or not and if they are, what level of lucidity and dream control can they achieve. This interview will comprise a series of questions based on the criteria established by German psychologist and lucid dreaming expert, Paul Tholey. By the end of this process it is expected to have selected the most experienced lucid dreamers. The participants will receive 30 dollars for each of the interviews that they will have to assist for the following year.

Study design

The study design that will be used is a panel study. A panel study is a type of longitudinal study in which a number of individuals are followed for a given period of time (Jones & Wang, 2005). During this time, the participants are subject of measurements at predetermined moments to analyze variations (Jones & Wang, 2005).

In this particular case, the panel of 10 participants (5 male and 5 female) will be followed for a period of 1 year. During this year, they will be subject of a monthly interview to collect qualitative data. In the end, each participant will take part in 12 interviews where their personal process with lucid dreaming will be followed.

Since the focus of this study is to explore the possible applications of lucid dreaming for therapy and self-actualization, the participants will be encouraged, at the beginning of the study and in each of the interview sessions, to use their ability to lucid dream to address

personal issues and try to improve aspects of their personality and/or behavior that they feel they would like to improve. It is expected that each participant will come up with different specific issues or areas that they would like to work on and, therefore, this study will cover a variety of themes.

During the whole length of the study, participants will be able to contact the researcher if they have any questions, difficulties or concerns with their process. The participants will also be offered guidance in the form of different advanced lucid dreaming techniques that they might use or ideas on how to address specific situations. For example a young musician that struggles with performance anxiety could be advised to practice in front of a dream audience each time he has a lucid dream. A participant that suffers from a phobia of rats could be advised to progressively face the object of her phobia in her lucid dreams and so on.

The monthly interview will be designed to explore different aspects of self-actualization and to find out whether or not the participants are experimenting any progress. The general line-out of the interview will be the same for all participants but in each case the researcher will elaborate on the participant's personal process. The instrument utilized will be a semi-structured interview.

This study aims to explore possible applications of lucid dreaming in a qualitative way. Since it has a reduced number of participants it is viable to obtain the data through interviews. The advantages of using a semi-structured interview as a measurement instrument include the possibility to collect in depth data regarding the participant's opinions and experience and the possibility to use complex questioning (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006). Interviewing is one of the most widely used methods for data collection

in qualitative researches and is also considered one of the most efficient methods for obtaining qualitative information (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Panel studies, in the other hand, provide several advantages over cross-sectional designs. They offer reliable information about change processes of individuals and groups in both objective and subjective dimensions (Duncan, Juster & Morgan, 1987). This makes a panel study design ideal for this longitudinal research project.

Data analysis

The data obtained from the interviews will be analyzed using qualitative content analysis, emphasizing the meaning assigned by the participants to their own experience.

Ethics

A number of ethical procedures will be taken in consideration to assure each of the participant's physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing.

In the first place, a consent form will be delivered to the participants. Here they will find all the information regarding the investigation and the procedures that will take place. Only the participants that voluntarily agree with this information and sign the consent form will be taken in consideration for the study.

Before the onset of the study, the participants will take part of an informative session where all the details of the investigation will be discussed. Here they will be able to ask any questions or comment on any aspect of the study.

Each of the participants will be guaranteed complete anonymity and confidentiality. Also if a participant considers that the results of his/her process during the investigation

should not be published, this information will be eliminated and will not appear in any publication.

Finally, the participants have the option to leave the study in any moment if they consider it appropriate. They will not be required to give any explications about their decision.

DATA ANALYSIS

Anticipated results

Even though lucid dreaming is a very recent field of study within psychology, most of the studies published in recent years suggest that there is a true potential for the use of induced lucid dreams in therapy, self-actualization and even in the learning of new skills (Doll, Gittler & Holzinger, 2009; LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990; Spoormaker & van den Bout, 2006; Tholey, 2012).

The therapeutic approaches that show the most promising results to the date focus mainly in the treatment of recurrent nightmares and PTSD (Spoormaker & van den Bout, 2006), resolution of intra-psychic and psychosocial conflicts as proposed by Paul Tholey (2012) and, more impressively, a correlation between lucid dreaming frequency and a better state of general mental health (Doll, Gittler & Holzinger, 2009).

The pioneer of lucid dreaming research Stephen LaBerge (1990), considers this practice to be a very useful tool in the path of self-exploration and self-actualization. Research has also shown promising results in the treatment of phobias and traumas (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990).

With all this background evidence, I expect that a significant part of the sample (probably 80%) will report some sort of positive change in their lives as a result of practicing lucid dreaming. I expect participants to become deeply involved with this practice and to view their dreams as a very significant part of their lives. As the literature suggests, I expect to see a most direct therapeutic effect in participants who experience nightmares, phobias and traumas but I also expect surprising results in other areas. For instance, I expect to

receive some feedback in relation with a boost in creativity and inspiration from participants that are involved in artistic disciplines. As the months pass by, probably all of the participants will become more engaged with this practice. This will probably have an impact in the frequency of lucid dreaming experiences that the participants have and in their quality of dream control. Finally I expect to see some evidence of possible therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming that have not yet been discussed in the scientific literature.

Discussion

As it was mentioned in the literature review, the topic of lucid dreaming appeared very recently in the scientific landscape. In this light, it is not surprising that our current scientific knowledge of this phenomenon is very limited and that a significant amount of information regarding this topic is merely anecdotal, lacking scientific validity.

Most of the studies on this topic agree in that more data is still needed to further explore the therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming. In most cases, studies have been conducted on small samples that are not representative. This is probably due to the difficulty of recruiting real, advanced lucid dreamers. On the other hand, when the aim is to train non-lucid dreamers or beginners, other difficulties appear. For instance, each person makes different progresses at different speeds. While some may learn this skill very easily there are others that will face a greater difficulty.

It has been proved that learning lucid dreaming is actually possible for almost anyone (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990), however it does require a great level of dedication. The person must be truly committed to the purpose of lucid dreaming before starting to get significant results. Many persons who experience spontaneous lucid dreaming don't have much control

over the frequency of these experiences and are not able to willingly self-induce one of these dreams.

As I expressed in the section of anticipated results, I expect my research to corroborate the current literature on the therapeutic applications of lucid dreaming, however, I also hope that this study will provide insight on new possible applications of this practice. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that suggest that the therapeutic spectrum of lucid dreaming might be much bigger than what the limited scientific research has demonstrated to this date. This is where this particular research becomes an interesting contribution to this field of study. Being an exploratory study, the main objective of this research is to discover new fields of application for the practice of lucid dreaming or to corroborate those previous anecdotal accounts with more solid data and, therefore, lay some of the groundwork for future, more specific, studies.

CONCLUSIONS

Limitations

Since this is a highly qualitative, exploratory study, one of the main limitations is that it will not provide solid, scientific data. Instead it will only offer clues for future researchers on different areas of interest that arise in this investigation. The information obtained through this investigation cannot be considered of scientific significance until further investigations support it. Another important limitation is the difficulty in the recruitment of participants. The level of lucid dreaming expertise that the present study demands is relatively high, therefore, finding participants that meet these characteristics and that are willing to take part in the investigation for a long period of time is rather challenging. Another problem is the small sample which is not representative of the population. Working with a larger sample in this type of longitudinal study would demand a large investigation team and an extensive budget.

Future research

The future research in this particular field could be enormous. I believe that the few research that has been done so far is only a glimpse of what the world of lucid dreaming could offer in terms of practical applications. For instance, it would be interesting to see some research of lucid dreaming therapy in the treatment of depression and anxiety and the modification of believe patterns, emotions and behaviors. More investigations are needed in order to improve the current techniques to achieve lucidity so that this practice could become more accessible to the public. This could include the development of new technological devices and scientific research of different plants and herbs that have a history

of usage in shamanic traditions. Finally, there is also a vast field of research on other practical applications of lucid dreaming that go beyond its use in therapy. The research of Paul Tholey (1990) on lucid dreaming and sports offers a lot of interesting hypothesis that still need to be confirmed. Among them, the possibility of practicing motor skills or even learning new skills while dreaming.

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APPENDIX A: ADVERTISEMENT



**31-02-2016 3:00 AM,
AULA**

SE BUSCAN ONIRONAUTAS

¿Te consideras un soñante lúcido? ¿Puedes controlar tus sueños a voluntad?

Si es así, te invitamos a participar de este evento donde se ofrecerá una conferencia abierta y tendrás la posibilidad de participar en un maravilloso estudio científico sobre los sueños lúcidos. Con tu participación podrás contribuir a uno de los campos más

BUSCAMOS
VOLUNTARIOS PARA
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CIENTIFICO
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SI CONSIDERAS QUE
ERES UN SOÑANTE
LÚCIDO Y ESTAS
INTERESADO EN
CONTRIBUIR A LA
CIENCIA, ASISTE A
LA ENTREVISTA!

RECOMPENSA
ECONOMICA PARA
QUIENES FORMEN
PARTE DE ESTE
ESTUDIO

INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO

www.morpheus.com

Investigador: Mario Fagan E.

Cel: 0985900000

Email: mfbcoo@hotmail.com

APPENDIX B: ETHICS



Comité de Bioética, Universidad San Francisco de Quito
 El Comité de Revisión Institucional de la USFQ
 The Institutional Review Board of the USFQ

SOLICITUD PARA APROBACION DE UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACION

INSTRUCCIONES:

1. Antes de remitir este formulario al CBE, se debe solicitar vía electrónica un código para incluirlo, a comitebioetica@usfq.edu.ec
2. Enviar solo archivos digitales. Esta solicitud será firmada en su versión final, sea de manera presencial o enviando un documento escaneado.
3. Este documento debe completarse con la información del protocolo del estudio que debe servir al investigador como respaldo.
4. Favor leer cada uno de los parámetros verificando que se ha completado toda la información que se solicita antes de enviarla.

DATOS DE IDENTIFICACIÓN	
Título de la Investigación	
	La Violencia Intrafamiliar y su Influencia en el Aprendizaje de los niños
Investigador Principal <i>Nombre completo, afiliación institucional y dirección electrónica</i>	Mario Alejandro Fegan Espinosa, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, mario.fegan@estud.usfq.edu.ec
Co-investigadores <i>Nombres completos, afiliación institucional y dirección electrónica. Especificar si no lo hubiera</i>	N/A
Persona de contacto <i>Nombre y datos de contacto incluyendo teléfonos fijo, celular y dirección electrónica</i>	Mario Fegan , tel: 666 666 cel_ 0987654xxxx mario.fegan@estud.usfq.edu.ec
Nombre de director de tesis y correo electrónico <i>Solo si es que aplica</i>	Sonja Embree, sembree@usfq.edu.ec
Fecha de inicio de la investigación	10 de enero de 2016
Fecha de término de la investigación	marzo 2017
Financiamiento	"personal"

DESCRIPCIÓN DEL ESTUDIO	
Objetivo General <i>Se debe responder tres preguntas: qué? cómo? y para qué?</i>	El objetivo de este estudio es investigar sobre las posibles aplicaciones terapéuticas de los sueños lúcidos. Para eso se plantea un estudio de panel en el cuál se seguirá a un grupo de 10 participantes durante 1 año mediante entrevistas. El propósito final es ofrecer nuevas ideas para trabajar con los sueños lúcidos en el ámbito de la psicoterapia.
Objetivos Específicos	

Determinar de qué formas pueden usarse los sueños lúcidos en psicoterapia.
Diseño y Metodología del estudio <i>Explicar el tipo de estudio (por ejemplo cualitativo, cuantitativo, con enfoque experimental, cuasi-experimental, pre-experimental; estudio descriptivo, transversal, de caso, in-vitro...) Explicar además el universo, la muestra, cómo se la calculó y un breve resumen de cómo se realizará el análisis de los datos, incluyendo las variables primarias y secundarias..</i>
El diseño del estudio es de tipo panel. Se reclutará a 10 participantes (5 hombres y 5 mujeres), todos ellos soñantes lúcidos, que serán evaluados a través de entrevistas semi-estructuradas durante 1 año. Se les pedirá que trabajen en conflictos psicológicos o emocionales personales y en su proceso de autorrealización. A lo largo de este periodo se espera determinar si la práctica de los sueños lúcidos ha tenido algún efecto positivo en la salud mental de los participantes y a través de qué mecanismos.
Procedimientos <i>Los pasos a seguir desde el primer contacto con los sujetos participantes, su reclutamiento o contacto con la muestra/datos.</i>
El reclutamiento de los participantes se llevará a cabo en una población universitaria. Para esto se distribuirá información a través de afiches en las principales universidades de la capital y se enviará información a través de los sistemas de correo electrónico de los participantes. Se realizará una convocatoria para una conferencia sobre los sueños lúcidos y al final de la misma se realizarán entrevistas individuales a todos los candidatos interesados en participar en el estudio. En base a estas entrevistas se decidirá quienes tienen un mayor nivel de lucidez y control de sus sueños y serán seleccionados para formar parte del estudio.
Recolección y almacenamiento de los datos <i>Para garantizar la confidencialidad y privacidad, de quién y donde se recolectarán datos; almacenamiento de datos—donde y por cuánto tiempo; quienes tendrán acceso a los datos, qué se hará con los datos cuando termine la investigación</i>
Los datos de los participantes serán recolectados por el investigador. Se garantizará un total anonimato y un manejo discreto de la información. Ningún dato sobre los participantes será divulgado sin su consentimiento. La información de los participantes y sus entrevistas serán guardadas en la computadora del investigador la cual cuenta con sistemas de seguridad y serán eliminados una vez concluido el estudio.
Herramientas y equipos <i>Incluyendo cuestionarios y bases de datos, descripción de equipos</i>
Para realizar este estudio se necesitará principalmente de un computador para almacenar la información y de una grabadora para registrar las entrevistas a los participantes.

JUSTIFICACIÓN CIENTÍFICA DEL ESTUDIO

Se debe demostrar con suficiente evidencia por qué es importante este estudio y qué tipo de aporte ofrecerá a la comunidad científica.

Los sueños son una de las herramientas más importantes en la práctica de la psicología. Los sueños lúcidos ofrecen la posibilidad de acceder e interactuar con contenido del inconsciente mientras se mantiene la consciencia. Por esta razón representan un campo del mayor interés para la psicología.

Referencias bibliográficas completas en formato APA

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DESCRIPCIÓN DE LOS ASPECTOS ÉTICOS DEL ESTUDIO

Criterios para la selección de los participantes *Tomando en cuenta los principios de beneficencia, equidad, justicia y respeto*

Se tomará en cuenta únicamente la edad de los participantes, el género para asegurar una representación equitativa de hombre y mujeres y finalmente se tomará en cuenta la habilidad de los participantes para tener sueños lúcidos.

Riesgos *Describir los riesgos para los participantes en el estudio, incluyendo riesgos físico, emocionales y psicológicos aunque sean mínimos y cómo se los minimizará*

Los riesgos de este estudio serán mínimos. Los participantes van a elegir que temas tratar durante su proceso sin embargo si llegan a experimentar estrés, tensión psicológica o emocional debido al contenido de sus sueños, se les ofrecerá terapia de manera independiente.

Beneficios para los participantes *Incluyendo resultados de exámenes y otros; solo de este estudio y cómo los recibirán*

Los participantes tendrán la oportunidad de cultivar la habilidad para tener sueños lúcidos y para utilizarlos de una forma beneficiosa en sus vidas. El objetivo de este estudio es encontrar aplicaciones terapéuticas para los sueños lúcidos. Se espera que los participantes se embarquen en un viaje de autodescubrimiento y autorrealización que puede llegar a tener efectos muy positivos en la totalidad de su vida.

Ventajas potenciales a la sociedad *Incluir solo ventajas que puedan medirse o a lo que se pueda tener acceso*

A través de este estudio se realizará una contribución importante a la comunidad científica y a la sociedad en general al desarrollar nuevos caminos terapéuticos y darle una mayor utilidad psicológica a la práctica de los sueños lúcidos.

Derechos y opciones de los participantes del estudio *Incluyendo la opción de no participar o retirarse del estudio a pesar de haber aceptado participar en un inicio.*

Se le garantiza al participante completa confidencialidad y anonimato así como la posibilidad de abandonar el estudio en cualquier momento de este dependiendo de lo que el participante considere apropiado. Además de esto los candidatos tienen la opción de no participar.

Seguridad y Confidencialidad de los datos *Describir de manera detallada y explícita como va a proteger los derechos de participantes*

Los datos serán almacenados en una computadora con sistemas de seguridad avanzados. Una vez concluido el estudio, las grabaciones de las entrevistas será eliminadas y cualquier información en papel será destruida.

Consentimiento informado *Quién, cómo y dónde se explicará el formulario/estudio. Ajustar el formulario o en su defecto el formulario de no aplicación o modificación del formulario*

El investigador será la persona que explicará a los participantes sobre los riesgos, beneficios del estudio. El investigador contestará todas las preguntas que tengan los participantes. El investigador informará a los participantes sobre todos los derechos que tienen los participantes.

Consentimiento Informado. (Participante)

Comprendo mi participación en este estudio. Me han explicado los riesgos y beneficios de participar en un lenguaje claro y sencillo. Todas mis preguntas fueron contestadas. Me permitieron contar con un tiempo suficiente para tomar la decisión de participar y me entregaron una copia de este formulario de consentimiento informado. Tengo conocimiento de todos mis derechos como participante. Acepto voluntariamente participar en esta investigación.

Firma del participante	Fecha
Firma del Investigador	Fecha
Consentimiento Informado. (Padres)	
<p>Permito a mi hijo/a participar en esta investigación sobre “La violencia intrafamiliar y su influencia en el aprendizaje de los niños”, entiendo que a lo largo de este estudio se mantendrá total confidencialidad y anonimato de los participantes y que el participante puede retirarse del estudio o negarse a responder a una pregunta si es que lo desea.</p>	
Firma del responsable	Fecha
Responsabilidades del investigador y co-investigadores dentro de este estudio.	
<p>Cuidar la salud tanto física, psicológica y emocional de los participantes. Brindar a los participantes la mayor información posible para que los participantes puedan realizar las encuestas sin ninguna dificultad. Asegurarse que todos los participantes conozcan sus derechos de poder retirarse del estudio o negarse a responder cualquier pregunta. Asegurarse de que la participación de todos los participantes sea anónima y confidencial. Entregar la investigación una vez ya finalizada a cualquier participante que así lo desee.</p>	

Documentos que se adjuntan a esta solicitud (ponga una X junto a los documentos que se adjuntan)			
Nombre del documento	Adjunto	Idioma	
		Inglés	Español
PARA TODO ESTUDIO			
1. Formulario de Consentimiento Informado (FCI) y/o Solicitud de no aplicación o modificación del FCI *			X
2. Formulario de Asentimiento (FAI) (si aplica y se va a incluir menores de 17 años)			
3. Herramientas a utilizar (Título de: entrevistas, cuestionarios, guías de preg., hojas de recolección de datos, etc)			X
4. Hoja de vida (CV) del investigador principal (IP)			X
SOLO PARA ESTUDIOS DE ENSAYO CLÍNICO			
5. Manual del investigador			
6. Brochures			
7. Seguros			
8. Información sobre el patrocinador			
9. Acuerdos de confidencialidad			
10. Otra información relevante al estudio (especificar)			

(*) La solicitud de no aplicación o modificación del FCI por escrito debe estar bien justificada.

PROVISIONES ESPECIALES

Esta sección debe llenar solo si aplica. En ella se incluyen manejo de población vulnerable y muestras biológicas, manejo de eventos adversos, seguros de incapacidad o muerte, entre otros.

CRONOGRAMA DE ACTIVIDADES

AÑO

Descripción de la Actividad (pasos a seguir dentro del proceso de investigación, comenzando por el contacto inicial, reclutamiento de participantes, intervención y/o recolección de datos, análisis, publicación...)	Fechas	2016							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Difundir la información en universidades	10	01/2016							
Realizar la conferencia y entrevistas	31	02/2016							
Hacer una reunión preliminar con los participantes	3	02/2016							
Recolección de datos	15	03/ 2016							
Análisis de datos	20	03/2017							
Redacción del informe	10	04/2017							
Publicación de la investigación	8	07/2017							

CERTIFICACIÓN:

1. Certifico no haber recolectado ningún dato ni haber realizado ninguna intervención con sujetos humanos, muestras o datos. Sí () No ()
2. Certifico que los documentos adjuntos a esta solicitud han sido revisados y aprobados por mi director de tesis. Sí () No () No Aplica ()

Firma del investigador: _____ (con tinta azul)

Fecha de envío al Comité de Bioética de la USFQ: _____



Comité de Bioética, Universidad San Francisco de Quito

El Comité de Revisión Institucional de la USFQ
The Institutional Review Board of the USFQ

Formulario Consentimiento Informado

Título de la investigación: La Violencia Intrafamiliar y su influencia en el aprendizaje de los niños

Organización del investigador: Universidad San Francisco de Quito

Nombre del investigador principal: José Ricardo Alarcón Galárraga

Datos de localización del investigador principal: 3564742, 0998127294,

jose.alarcon@estud.usfq.edu.ec

Co-investigadores

DESCRIPCIÓN DEL ESTUDIO

Introducción *(Se incluye un ejemplo de texto. Debe tomarse en cuenta que el lenguaje que se utilice en este documento no puede ser subjetivo; debe ser lo más claro, conciso y sencillo posible; deben evitarse términos técnicos y en lo posible se los debe reemplazar con una explicación)*

Modern research of lucid dreaming has shown that there is a considerable number of people that experience lucid dreaming naturally and spontaneously throughout their lives (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). The majority of people, however, doesn't experience this kind of dreams without previous training. Good news is that lucid dreaming can be learned by almost anyone. It is in fact relatively easy to learn for the average person (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). Once in the path of lucid dreaming, this ability can be mastered to the point of attaining almost total dream control and free will every time the dreamer so desires. With all this potential, the practice of lucid dreaming can easily become a very efficient and safe way of self-exploration and even self-healing at deep levels of the psyche.

Propósito del estudio *(incluir una breve descripción del estudio, incluyendo el número de participantes, evitando términos técnicos e incluyendo solo información que el participante necesita conocer para decidirse a participar o no en el estudio)*

El diseño del estudio es de tipo panel. Se reclutará a 10 participantes (5 hombres y 5 mujeres), todos ellos soñantes lúcidos, que serán evaluados a través de entrevistas semi-estructuradas durante 1 año. Se les pedirá que trabajen en conflictos psicológicos o emocionales personales y en su proceso de autorrealización. A lo largo de este periodo se espera determinar si la práctica de los sueños lúcidos ha tenido algún efecto positivo en la salud mental de los participantes y a través de qué mecanismos.

Descripción de los procedimientos *(breve descripción de los pasos a seguir en cada etapa y el tiempo que tomará cada intervención en que participará el sujeto)*

Los participantes serán objeto de 1 entrevista mensual durante un año sumando en total 12 entrevistas. El el estilo de entrevista será semi-estructurado.

Riesgos y beneficios *(explicar los riesgos para los participantes en detalle, aunque sean mínimos, incluyendo riesgos físicos, emocionales y/o psicológicos a corto y/o largo plazo, detallando cómo el investigador minimizará estos riesgos; incluir además los beneficios tanto para los participantes como para la sociedad, siendo explícito en cuanto a cómo y cuándo recibirán estos beneficios)*

No existen riesgos físicos, psicológicos ni emocionales en esta investigación. Los participantes elegirán a su criterio los temas personales que deseen tratar.

Confidencialidad de los datos *(se incluyen algunos ejemplos de texto)*

Los datos de los participantes serán recolectados por el investigador. Se garantizará un total anonimato y un manejo discreto de la información. Ningún dato sobre los participantes será divulgado sin su consentimiento. La información de los participantes y sus entrevistas serán guardadas en la computadora del investigador la cuál cuenta con sistemas de seguridad y serán eliminados una vez concluido el estudio.

Derechos y opciones del participante *(se incluye un ejemplo de texto)*

Consentimiento informado *(Es responsabilidad del investigador verificar que los participantes tengan un nivel de comprensión lectora adecuado para entender este documento. En caso de que no lo tuvieran el documento debe ser leído y explicado frente a un testigo, que corroborará con su firma que lo que se dice de manera oral es lo mismo que dice el documento escrito)*

- El participante tiene derecho a hacer preguntas sobre la investigación
- El participante tiene derecho de abandonar la investigación en cualquier momento.
- El participante tiene el derecho de negarse a responder preguntas de la entrevista.
- El participante puede negarse a proporcionar información.
- El participante tiene la opción de recibir el informe final de la investigación.

Información de contacto

Email: mario.fegan@estud.usfq.edu.ec

Celular: 09xxxxxxxx

Comprendo mi participación en este estudio. Me han explicado los riesgos y beneficios de participar en un lenguaje claro y sencillo. Todas mis preguntas fueron contestadas. Me permitieron contar con tiempo suficiente para tomar la decisión de participar y me entregaron una copia de este formulario de consentimiento informado. Tengo conocimiento de todos mis derechos como participante. Acepto voluntariamente participar en esta investigación.	
Firma del participante	Fecha
Firma del testigo <i>(si aplica)</i>	Fecha
Nombre del investigador que obtiene el consentimiento informado	
Firma del investigador	Fecha

APPENDIX C: INSTRUMENTS

Semi-structured interview

Entrevista sueños lúcidos

1. ¿Sientes que tu estado de ánimo ha cambiado desde que empezó este proceso?
2. ¿Ha cambiado tu nivel de aceptación hacia ti mismo y tus defectos?
3. ¿Existe algún cambio importante en tus relaciones interpersonales?
4. ¿Has experimentado cambios en tu creatividad/ imaginación?
5. ¿Sientes que tu vida tiene un propósito trascendental, encuentras sentido en ella?
6. ¿Ha habido algún cambio en tu capacidad de controlar los sueños?
7. ¿Has experimentado alguna experiencia mística o transformadora en tus sueños lúcidos?
8. ¿Has experimentado algún progreso en la superación de tus miedos, fobias o traumas?
9. ¿Cuál es tu actitud con respecto al uso de los sueños lúcidos como una forma de terapia?
10. ¿Ha existido algún cambio en tu nivel de bienestar psicológico/ emocional?