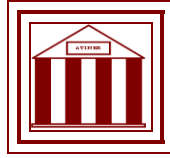


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PSY2015-1502**

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
Perspectives to a Model on Social
Phobia Based on Plato's Dialogue of
Crito**

**George Varvatsoulis
Lecturer
Newham College University Centre
UK**

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Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Perspectives to a Model on Social Phobia Based on Plato's Dialogue of Crito

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Abstract

In this paper, it is attempted an interdisciplinary approach between a model on social phobia and the book of Plato's 'Crito' in line to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) considerations. To conduct this study, I have devised an inventory based on Crito's conversations with Socrates, wherefrom I have extracted the constructs 'virtue', 'justice' and 'legality'. I have employed correlational design to test these constructs against the social phobia model, and in particular against its constructs 'effortful processing', 'inhibitory behaviours' and 'feelings of shame and embarrassment'. Correlations have taken place in view to the relationships between the three constructs from the book of Plato, while their associations were discussed in line to the three social phobia constructs named above. Correlations were found significant and positive though weak in direction. In effect, correlations suggested associations between the constructs of Plato's book to the social phobia ones. Possibility for such associations and explanations, as to why could this be applicable, were elaborated in the discussion section of this study. Major limitation to the study was that I have only devised an inventory based on Plato's book. What I could have done would be to devise one more inventory based on the social phobia model. In doing so, I could probably have discovered strong correlations, and not weak ones in-between them. The latter remains to be further investigated in a future replication of the same study.

Keywords: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Social Phobia, Virtue, Justice, Legality, Effortful Processing, Inhibitory Behaviours, Feelings of Shame and Embarrassment.

Introduction

Social phobia, otherwise called 'social anxiety disorder', defines a fear about assumed and/or anticipatory situations of threat, which one considers as triggering worry against one's expected performance in the vicinity of others (Clark, 1999). Situations, where fear can be elicited to support social phobia, are speaking in public, socialising and interacting with others, relationships, cooperation with others in the workplace, seeking and receiving advice from salient others, others' social expectations of oneself etc. (Bögels et al., 2010). Social phobia in the examples like the aforementioned can be elicited after the emergence of fear triggered by thoughts of threat and worry (Craske et al., 2009).

Social phobia is considered as the main suffering condition for people of the middle classes (Gillis, 2005). Numerous studies have been conducted to identify and discuss social anxiety in relation to issues of communication, fear of negative evaluation from others, fear or dread before the possibility of exposure to common social situations (Beck et al., 1985; Rapee, 1995; Hofmann & Barlow, 2002). Common idea of all those studies is that they point out to the same direction, which is anxiety about expected failure. The aspect of 'failure' constitutes an element of socially anxious individuals about what others think of them in a social milieu, and how does that 'affect' them with regards to negative appraisals, feelings -physical and emotional- and behaviours (Wells & Papageorgiou, 1998).

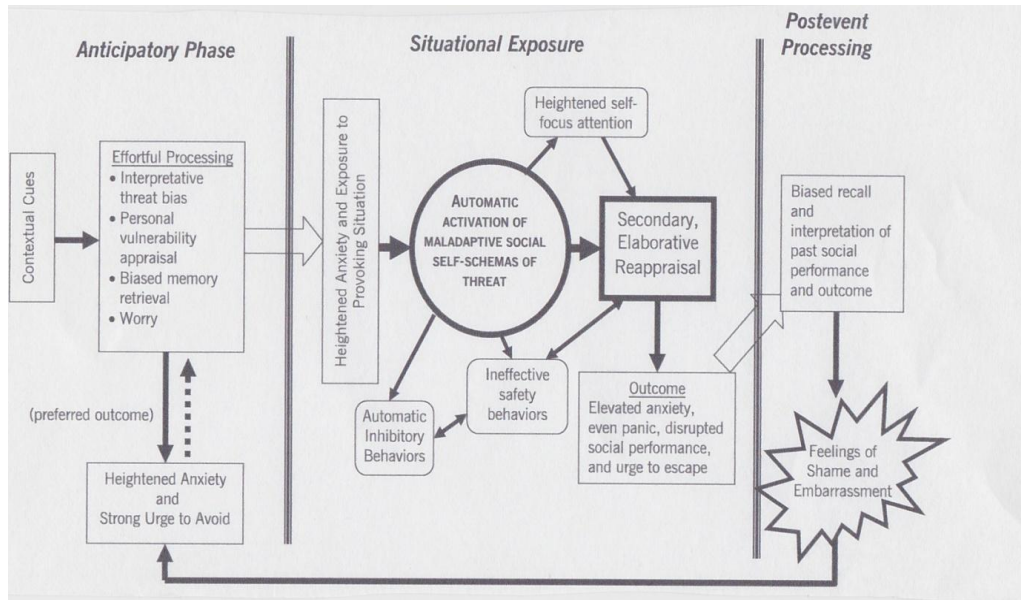
In the book of Crito, we find a number of different, yet similar, approaches to social phobia. Those refer to the way Crito anticipates them in relation to how others would see him, if he was not to 'complete the task' of helping Socrates escape from prison (Crito, 118: 44d). The book of Crito is one of a kind because it presents social phobia as disguised by Crito's willfulness to 'save' Socrates from death (Crito, 120-123: 45a-46a). Crito's social phobia is disguised by the 'fact' that 'saving Socrates', Socrates would be able to carry on his work of inspiring people's minds with his ideas (Crito, 121: 45c). The reason I have chosen this writing, is because can be attested being like a 'predecessor' to modern CBT protocols regarding social phobia.

The protocol I am going to use emerged from the writings of Clark and Wells (1995) and Rapee and Heimberg (1997). Three phases are entertained in this protocol: the *anticipatory phase*, which relates to individual's interpretation of threat with regards to personal vulnerability; the *situational exposure phase*, in relation to given events in life, and how these affect oneself; the *post-event processing phase*, as to the interpretation of the social event and its outcome in the here and now (Clark & Beck, 2011). This protocol will be compared to the inventory I have devised and titled as '**A model on social phobia based on Plato's dialogue of Crito**', that summarises Socrates's conversations with his pupil Crito in jail.

I came with the idea of this self-devised questionnaire having studied Clark and Wells's (1995) and Rapee and Heimberg's (1997) protocol regarding the social phobia disorder. What this protocol is concerned about is to present

social phobia in view to the anticipatory, situational exposure and post-event processing phases. These three phases are the main elements which demonstrate social phobia as an anxiety disorder.

The diagram suggesting these three phases for social anxiety disorder has been recorded as follows:



Courtesy of Well's and Beck's (2011)

Anticipatory Phase

The anticipatory phase underlines stimuli that are received from the environment through the senses which have to do with contextual experience, i.e. with experience that it is the outcome of interplay between past and present circumstances associated to situations and/or events (Steiner, 2002).

Situational Exposure

The situational exposure refers to how triggers eliciting the memory of circumstantial experiences become maladaptive when individuals interpret, feel, and act upon events in life that are regarded as predisposing factors to one's understanding of oneself; one's relationship to others; one's relationship to the social milieu (Morgan, 2010).

Post-event processing

Post-event processing is the maintenance cycle of maladaptive thinking, feeling and behaving. In this maintenance, assumptions and interpretations take place which relate to cognitive distortions of externalised and/or internalised importance, such as individuals considering in a generalised and black-and-white thinking that circumstantial experience can be an ongoing eventful reality to one's here-and-now (Hofmann, 2007).

In parallel to this framework for social anxiety, I have chosen Plato's dialogue of Crito for the reason it is a writing that underlines these three

distinct phases in the experience of social anxiety disorder. In this text, we see Crito rushing into the jail where Socrates was kept, the very last night before Socrates's execution with the poison conium (hemlock) (Vetter, 2004). In this dialogue, Crito is trying to convince Socrates to flee from jail and be free (Crito, 121-123: 45d-46a). Socrates in his discussion with Crito tries to help Crito comprehend of the *real* reason that his pupil wants him free (Crito, 123-125: 46b-47a). As conversation advances, Socrates by using his famous open questioning helps Crito understand that the reason Crito wants him free, is not for the sake of Socrates but for the sake of Crito himself (Crito, 130-148: 48d-54e). What we read in this text is that Crito wishes Socrates to flee because of Crito's worry and fear that if it doesn't happen Crito will be accused by others that did nothing to save Socrates (Crito. 118: 44b-44c). In the text, there are unveiled assumptions and hypotheses referring to how Crito would feel about himself if Socrates was to drink the conium. In the end, it becomes apparent that Crito wants the safety of Socrates, so in the eyes of others not to be seen as a wealthy young man who though had the financial surface to save Socrates he didn't succeed so (Crito, 118: 44c). What it is recorded in this dialogue is that Crito was looking after himself and his social affairs when he was trying to save Socrates, so that the name he had in the Athenian society not to fall short in the minds of others, if he couldn't convince his master to flee from prison. Crito's worry was that if Socrates was to choose to die instead, Crito's reputation in the Athenian society would be put at stake, i.e he would feel defamed.

In this paper, I am employing Plato's dialogue of Crito to discuss the three phases of social anxiety disorder. The way I am trying to do so is by devising an inventory coming out of statements -both Socrates's and Crito's- which are relevant and expressive to social phobia, comparing it to the above social anxiety framework. In such respect, my aim is to demonstrate that those three phases can be better explained if revised according to Socrates's conversations with Crito. My hypothesis to this study is co-relating the self-devised inventory to the model of social phobia in terms of constituent parts of the dialogue explaining the three phases of the model. What this hypothesis will try to support will be the assumption that constructs, such as *virtue*, *justice* and *legality*, coming from Plato's book, are positively associated to the constructs of *effortful processing*, *inhibitory behaviours* and *feelings of shame and embarrassment* presented in the protocol for social phobia.

Method

Participants

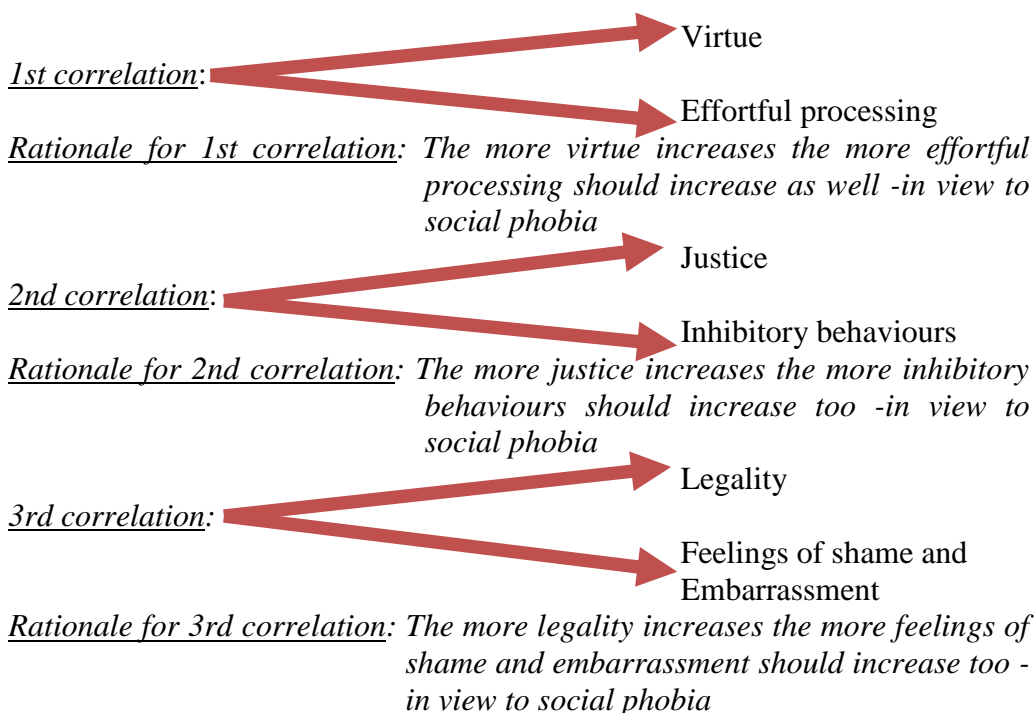
115 participants were recruited for this study. Participants were a convenient sample. All were students at the Newham College University Centre (NCUC). They have voluntarily agreed to take part in my study. No compensation for their participation was offered. 21 were males and 94 females. Mean age and standard deviation were 39 and 11 respectively.

Design

The design will be correlational. The constructs to be associated will be *virtue* - the way that appears in Plato's text- against the *effortful processing* of the anticipatory phase; *justice* -the way that appears in Plato's text- against the *inhibitory behaviours* of the situational exposure phase; *legality* -the way that appears in Plato's text- against *feelings of shame and embarrassment* of the post-event processing phase of the protocol.

I have selected two-tailed hypothesis for the reason if a relationship to be found could indicate that the increase or decrease of the constructs from Plato's text could assume the increase or decrease of the constructs of the respective three phases. The explanation I provide for having chosen two-tailed hypothesis is that in social phobia protocols haven't so far been conducted any studies related to possible associations between constructs discussed in those protocols and constructs coming out of Plato's writings where conversations between Socrates and his pupils are observed.

In considering those correlations together, the following diagram appears:



Tools/Measures

The self devised inventory titled 'A model on social phobia based on Plato's dialogue of Crito' [Appendix 1; Appendix 2 contains the statements from Plato's book translated from Greek to be employed for the purpose of this study].

Procedure

The main scope of this study is to question whether the protocol on social phobia -as that has been suggested and developed according to Clark and Wells' (1995) and Rapee and Heimberg's (1997) approach- could be revised in view to the self-devised inventory on social phobia I have developed using Crito's dialogue with Socrates. Participants were administered the questionnaires, but before completing them they were explained the purpose of the study as this is outlined in the introduction. The ideas of virtue, justice and legality were discussed in view to the present inventory. Respondents were also explained how these three ideas are understood in Plato's text and what is the importance of the writing for the understanding of social phobia. Recruiters were also presented with the rationale how the ideas of virtue, justice and legality can be related to personal efforts, inhibitions and feelings. Examples, I have used to assist participants comprehend that rationale, followed discussion we had in class about social phobia in cognitive-behavioural terms. What I have done to discuss correlations in this study was to choose statements from Plato's text according to the ideas of virtue, justice and legality. These ideas were applied to the statements as follows: 1=virtue; 2=virtue; 3=virtue; 4=justice; 5=legality/justice; 6=justice; 7=justice/legality; 8=justice/legality; 9=virtue; 10=justice; 11=virtue; 12=legality. Before employing this self-devised questionnaire, I have pilot-studied it with another 20 participants so to consider reliability issues as to its statements. After scores were collected from both the pilot and the main study, were inserted to the SPSS for data analysis.

Results

Table 1. Pilot Study-Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α based on standardised items	N of Items
.563	.643	12

For statement no. 09 of the inventory, there is a strong indication that it is not consistent part of the scale -correlation is very low (.021). R^2 is also low (.51). Perhaps, this item could be an indicator for the statement to be deleted or change.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Frequency	Age	Mean	Standard Deviation
Males	21	20	39	11
Females	94	61		
<i>N</i>	115			

$M=39, SD=11$

Table 3. Inferential Statistics

Correlations	Pearson's <i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Virtue-Justice	.403	.000
Justice-Legality	.309	.001
Virtue-Legality	.250	.007
<i>N</i> of cases	115	

- There was a significant positive correlation between virtue and justice ($r=.403$, $N=115$, $p<0.01$, 2-tailed). It is a weak correlation because only 16% of the variance is explained.
- There was a significant positive correlation between justice and legality ($r=.309$, $N=115$, $p<0.01$, 2-tailed). It is also a weak correlation because only 10% of the variance is explained.
- There was a significant positive correlation between virtue and legality ($r=.250$, $N=115$, $p<0.01$, 2-tailed). However, again a weak correlation is found because only 10% of the variance is explained.

Discussion

Significant and positive correlations were found between constructs deriving from Plato's book of Crito. What was found was that *virtue* and *justice* in the book of Crito were significantly and positively related together, though in a weak association. The same direction and association were found between the constructs of *justice* and *legality* and *virtue* and *legality*. Constructs, those correlations to be discussed against, were *effortful processing*, *inhibitory behaviours* and *feelings of shame and embarrassment*, all representing the anticipatory, situational exposure and post-event processing phases respectively.

The hypothesis, as stated in the introduction of this study, assumed that the constructs of *virtue*, *justice* and *legality* could be respectively associated to the constructs of *effortful processing*, *inhibitory behaviours* and *feelings of shame and embarrassment*. To discuss possible associations, having found significant and positive correlations between the constructs of Plato's Crito, we could look to **the exercise of virtue** and how that might **relate to inhibitory behaviours and feelings of shame and embarrassment**.

In looking at the anticipatory phase, 'effortful processing' explains socially phobic issues related to 'threat', 'personal vulnerability' and 'worry'. Exercise of virtue obliges one towards effortful processing of elements to be satisfied, such as one to be a good citizen so to be accepted from others. In many cases, however, such as in the example, virtue can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, which cannot be satisfied, leading one's effortful processing in decline. If effortful processing is in decline, virtue cannot prove one as just individual to the effect one to start worrying and thinking one is vulnerable to others'

considerations about oneself, giving rise thus to the aspect of threat before assumed feared situations (Ouimet et al., 2009). One by thinking that one's 'virtue' is no longer regarded as one's personal attribute in a social milieu, may consider to harbour 'inhibitory behaviours', so to compensate his or her negative appraisals by avoiding social situations appraised to convey characteristics of threat, affective vulnerability and worry (Gorlin & Teachman, 2014).

The way inhibitory behaviours can operate in a case of such an individual, could relate to ideas of justice, such as telling lies, so the individual not to be disclosed, to the effect one to suppressing self-knowledge which could be beneficial for one's own development, such as not being fair before things the individual should have acknowledged about him/herself. To consider inhibitory behaviours, according to the situational exposure phase, the individual elaborates more thoughts of threat in line with maladaptive social schemas related mostly to personal performance (Pinto-Gouveia et al., 2006). Example: if an individual considers oneself as unable to perform before others, such as talking in the presence of them, justice can be the outcome of self-focus attention, whereby one condemns oneself for his or her inability to communicate and interact (Spurr & Stopa, 2002).

It's easy now to understand, how feelings of shame and embarrassment could relate to one's difficulty to communicate and interact. One by having experienced thoughts of worry and threat, and then inhibiting actions because of such thinking, one can now experience feelings of shame and embarrassment remembering that in social performance terms one didn't perform well (McGregor and Elliot, 2005). Feelings of shame and embarrassment refer to the emotional processing of a so-called 'virtuous' and 'just' self (Tangney et al., 2007). Example: If one's effortful processing has fallen apart, one may consider it is difficult to be 'just' and 'legal', i.e. to be honest and truthful as to what one hasn't achieved, to the outcome to be feeling shameful and embarrassed. Shame and embarrassment are the emotions to be felt when one is in the vicinity of salient, less salient, or non-salient others, thereby the avoidance and continuation of social phobia as an escape choice to one's life (Henderson et al., 2014).

'Virtue', 'justice' and 'legality' relate to the aspect of social phobia in terms of performance, acceptance from others, lack of tolerating thoughts of rejection, difficulty in dealing with others' assumed considerations about one's behaviours etc. (Brook & Schmidt, 2008). These constructs explain that social phobia in Plato's book relates also to the fact that the lack of assuming personal responsibility is another indicator that an individual will find difficult to accept. That means, one to accept to be in the wrong, or subject to the 'wrongness' of others, thereby incapable to satisfy his or her self-focus need to be the centre of the attention of them (Schultz & Heimberg, 2008). In such a case, one will regard oneself to be a failure due to the situational exposure one considers that was brought about as far as one's performance is concerned. In thinking of oneself as thus, one can easily feel shame and embarrassment if one's views about oneself are anticipated as not having been satisfied, such as Crito's self-

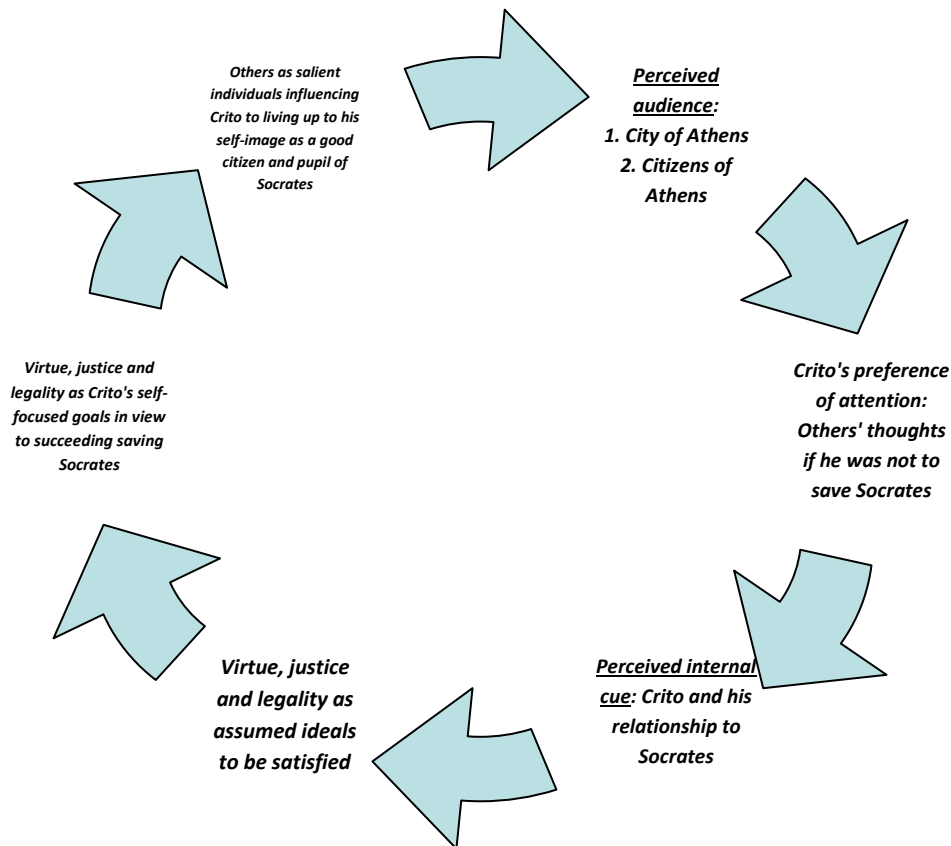
consideration that he will be harshly judged by others if he fails to save Socrates, in case his master finally drinks the conium (Irvine, 2008).

In finalising the above discussions, according to the cognitive-behavioural framework -as that appears in Plato's work of Crito- the *perceived audience*, where the whole thinking process of Crito's takes place is the city of Athens and its citizens. There, Crito allocates preferences of attention to his person through ideas how others would see him, if he was not to save Socrates. That kind of understanding is seen by Crito as a *perceived internal cue* regarding others' consideration of his person in his relationship to Socrates. In Crito's mind, *assumed appraisals* of Athenian citizens as to his person, relate to the aspects of virtue (*how good has he been in his relationship to Socrates?*); justice (*how honest is what he does to save Socrates in the eyes of his fellow citizens?*); and legality (*how legal is to do that going against the laws of the city?*). All these three ideas, or ideals, are regarded by Crito as *self-focused goals* how others would think of him, if he was to succeed or fail to save Socrates¹. The way Crito understands himself in the social environment associates with the fact that salient others influence the way he sees himself in terms of living up to a *self-image* that can prove him both *a good pupil of Socrates* as well as *a good citizen of the city*.

In trying a diagram to depict what I have outlined in this paragraph with regards to Crito's social phobia that could appear as follows:

¹Crito's effort to save Socrates was part of his understanding that 'virtue', 'justice' and 'legality' were the cornerstone that kept the City going. The fact however, that he did not succeed in saving his Teacher was finally regarded as a *failure* by him for the reason, *the values of the City and his personal need to keep Socrates alive*, proved totally divergent from each other. And that was where social phobia was down-powering Crito, because he was experiencing a tug-of-war between his anxiety Socrates to continue living and the social derivatives of his actions: on one hand to pay the guards so to let Socrates go, and on the other his phobia that if Socrates would choose the contrary, citizens of the City would gratingly judge him *as* he didn't try enough to save him.

A cognitive behavioural model on social phobia based on Socrates's conversations with Crito



Strengths and Limitations

In coming to the end of the discussion, I would like to state strengths and limitations which on one hand provide insights to the development of this topic, and on the other offer alternatives how the same study could be replicated to forward the theoretical and empirical premises outlined in this subject-matter.

Strengths

One of the main strengths in this study is that it focuses on the interdisciplinary perspective, Socratic dialogue writings to be associated with mental conditions, such as social phobia. So far, there hasn't been attempted in CBT a correlation of protocols in a parallel consideration to the Socratic philosophical thought, such as the book of Crito. What has been attempted in this interdisciplinary perspective was to try Socratic dialogue texts in view to current cognitive behavioural ideas, such as that of social phobia. Another strength is that in this attempt there have been taken into account premises, such as 'virtue', 'justice' and 'legality', which could expand this dialogue between current CBT approaches and Socratic ideas. Though, my attempt is far from complete, I am confident that I have provided some insights how such interdisciplinary discussion might carry on.

Limitations

One of the main limitations in this study is that I have co-related ideas coming out solely from Plato's book of Crito. The associations I attempted to do between these ideas and ideas from the social phobia protocol were suggestions how the self-devised inventory could be understood if that was to be taken over as a paradigm for social phobia and be further developed. What this limitation shows is that if I was to devise a second inventory based on specific social phobia aspects, such as those of 'effortful processing', 'inhibitory behaviours' and 'feelings of shame and embarrassment', correlations to Plato's book could probably be more significant (in Pearson's r terms) and possibly strong (as to the direction of correlation). One other limitation is that I could re-conduct the pilot study with same or different participants to see whether by excluding the item 09, reliability could be more consistent.

Conclusion

In studying Plato's dialogue of Crito, and after conducting the correlations, I come to the conclusion that Clark and Wells' (1995) and Rapee and Heimberg's (1997) framework on social phobia could be better advanced as a treatment protocol if the aspects of effortful processing, inhibitory behaviours and feelings of shame and embarrassment could be elaborated in terms of the constructs of virtue, justice and legality.

The reason for such advancement of the former aspects lies to the fact that the anticipatory, situational exposure and post-event processing phases, take place as distinct features to the social anxiety disorder. These phases operate distinctively due to the cognitive processing of one's maladaptive understanding regarding the exercise of virtues, the application of justice and the presence of legality in interpersonal and social relationships.

The effort I have spent in conducting this study certainly doesn't stop here. Results and findings of it though appear not as relevant as to the correlations I have made, they nevertheless point to the understanding that Socratic texts if were to be included in current CBT protocols, would probably better explain interventions so treatments to be met. In writing that, I do mean that Socratic texts need to have an effective participation in the whereabouts of modern CBT, in view to enhance its theoretical and practical endeavours towards assisting contemporary individuals in their here-and-now understanding of themselves.

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APPENDIX 1

'A model on social phobia based on Plato's dialogue of Crito'

(Please, circle your choice on each of the following statements)

Gender:

Age:

1. "I appear to value my riches more, instead of my friends"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
2. "I should not care so much for the opinions of the many"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
3. "I should think the things in my life carefully, so that no evil-doing may result to disgracefulness"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
4. "I should recur to the argument that what I'm doing now may be an outcome of what I have done in the past"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
5. "To stay in one place and live there, means that I accept the law, the rules, and the principles of a given society"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
6. "We need not to be anxious about living, but about living well"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
7. "If the beginning of an inquiry is well structured, then questions are more easily answered with regards to social issues"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
8. "Is it right one to do evil in return, when one has been evilly treated?"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
9. "Others' opinions affect us from the time we pay too much attention to them"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	
10. "Considerations and sayings of other people, in reality belong to multitudes of sophisms, which rashly try to resolve problems, and in effect cause harm instead"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree							Agree	

