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IMPACT OF TAROT CARDS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING PRACTICES AMONG THE CLIENTS IN IMPHAL VALLEY REGION OF MANIPUR

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Abstract

A case study was done on 20 numbers of clients using simple random sampling technique in Imphal valley who came with mental issues. The study was done to compare the mental status before and after reading, also to analyse the effect of tarot guidance, prediction on mental condition and counseling practices of clients and also to study the effect of crystal and ritual on mental status of clients. It was found that Tarot cards help in reducing mental problems and controlling mental health by providing guidance, positive thoughts and strong intuitions. It was further found that the counseling practices, rituals and recommended crystals could provide a good feedback in terms of mental health to the clients.

Keywords: Tarot Cards, Mental Health, Counseling, Clients

Introduction

Tarot cards are a deck of 78 cards used for telling and self-discovery. They are also used for cartomancy, a practice that involves interpreting cards to gain insight into past, present or future. A traditional tarot deck contains 78 cards. These 78 cards are divided into main categories- the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. Each card holds a specific meaning and symbolism, contributing to the overall narrative of a tarot reading.

The Major Arcana: 22 cards

The major arcana consist of 22 cards, each representing significant life events, spiritual lessons or powerful energies. These cards are often considered the most influences or themes in a person's life. The major arcane consists of 22 cards, each representing significant life events, spiritual lessons or powerful energies. The major arcana are numbered from 0 to 21, starting with the Fool and the World.

The Fool(0) symbolizes new beginnings, spontaneity and taking a leap of faith. The Magician(1) represents manifestation, resourcefulness and using one's Skills to achieve goals, The High Priestess(2) signifies intuition, mystery and inner knowledge. The Empress(3) embodies nurturing, abundance and creativity. The Emperor(4) represents authority, structure and leadership. The Heirophant(5) represents tradition, conformity, morality, ethics. The Lovers(6) symbolizes love, relationship and choices. The Chariot(7) symbolizes inner strength, bravery, compassion, focus, direction, control, will power. The Wheel of Fortune(10) signifies change, cycle and destiny. Justice (11) represents cause and effect, clarity, truth. The Hanged Man (12) represents sacrifice, release, martyrdom. Death(13) represents transformation, endings and new beginnings. Temperance(14) represents middle path, patience, finding meaning. The Devil(15) symbolizes addiction, materialism, playfulness. The Tower(16) signifies sudden upheaval, chaos and revelation. The Star(17) represents hope, faith, rejuvenation. The Moon(18) represents unconsciousness, illusion, intuition. The Sun(19) represents success, celebration, positivity. Judgement(20) represents reflection, reckoning, awakening. The World(21) symbolizes completion, wholeness and fulfillment.

The Minor Arcana: 56 Cards

The minor arcana consist of 56 cards, divided into four suits: Wands, cups, swords and pentacles. Each suit represents different aspects of life and is similar to a deck of playing cards with numbers from Ace to 10 and four court cards(Page, Knight, Queen and King)



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The Four Suits:

Wands

Element- Fire

Represents- Action, ambition, creativity and passion

Keywords- Feelings, compassion, emotional fulfillment

The cards along with their significance

The Ace of Wands- new beginnings, creativity, The Two of Wands- courage, daring and taking on a new path, The Three of Wands- enterprise, trade, commerce and looking forward to something with optimism, The Four of Wands- joy, celebration, harmony and stability, The Five of Wands- conflict, competition and rivalry, The Six of Wands- success, triumph and recognition, The Seven of Wands- standing up for your ideas, values and career, The Eight of Wands- rapid movement, speed and change, The Nine of Wands- perserverance and inner strength, The Ten of Wands- feeling burdened by too many responsibilities, Page of Wands- new ideas, inspiration and limitless potential, Knight of Wands- v Energy, confidence and taking action, Queen of Wands- confidence, creativity and enthusiasm, King of Wands- visionary leader, confidence and creativity.[Biddy Tarot]

Pentacles

Element- Earth

Represents- financial and physical aspects

Keywords- effort, patience, ambition, stability

The cards along with their significance

The Ace of Pentacles- new opportunities, wealth and prosperity, The Two of pentacles- balance, flexibility and adaptability, The Three of Pentacles- teamwork, collaboration and Shared vision, The Four of Pentacles- a loss of wealth, greed or fear of loss, The Five of Pentacles- loss, disconnection or a lack of spiritual fulfillment, The Six of Pentacles- the exchange of material resources including money and generosity, The Seven of Pentacles- patience, perseverance and the rewards of long term commitment, The Eight of Pentacles- dedication to a task and the potential rewards for that dedication, The Nine of Pentacles- financial independence, self-sufficiency and material success, The 10 of Pentacles- financial security, legacy and abundance, Page of Pentacles- new beginnings, creativity and financial abundance, Knight of Pentacles- a person who is dedicated, responsible and methodical, Queen of Pentacles- a responsible, down to earth person who balances practicality with enjoying life, King of Pentacles- financial security, wealth and practical leadership

Swords

Element: Air

Represents: thought, communication and speech

Keywords: intellect, action, logic

The cards along with their significance

The Ace of Swords- mental clarity, intellect and success, The Two of Swords- indecision, stalemate or difficult choice, The Three of Swords- heartbreak, emotional pain, sorrow and grief, The Four of Swords- rest, relaxation and recuperation, The



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Five of Swords- conflict, loss and the need for communication, The Six of Swords- transition, healing, moving away from difficulty, The Seven of Swords- deception, dishonest and trickery, The Eight of Swords- feeling trapped, restricted and hopeless, The Nine of Swords- anxiety, fear and despair, The Ten of Swords- defeat, despair and end of a cycle, Page of Swords- curious, energetic and sharp mind, Knight of Wands- action, determination, overcoming obstacles, Queen of Swords- intellect, wisdom, clear judgement, King of Swords- authority, intellectual power, ability to think critically.

Cups

Element: Water

Represents: emotions, relationship and intuition

Keywords: feelings, spirituality, compassion

The cards along with their significance

The Ace of Cups- new beginnings, love and emotional connections, The Two of Cups- connection, harmony and partnership, The Three of Cups- coming together with friends and community to celebrate and support each other, The Four of Cups- you need to reevaluate your perspective and state of mind, The Five of Cups- sadness, loss, disappointed over past events, The Six of Cups- nostalgia, reconnecting with the past embracing childhood innocence, The Seven of Cups- you are presented with multiple choices but you should be careful about which one to choose, The Eight of Cups- a turning away from what is unfulfilling and moving towards something new and more meaningful, The Nine of Cups- the fulfillment of dreams and aspiration, The Ten of Cups- happiness, contentment and emotional fulfillment, Page of Cups- a young person, innocence and creativity, Knight of Cups- a Strong connection to emotions, romantic idealism, creativity and intelligence to follow ones’s heart desires, Queen of Cups- compassion, emotional depth and intuitive guidance, king of Cups- compassion, wisdom and kindness.

The potential benefits of tarot cards are-

1. Self- Reflection and Insight
2. Empowerment and Decision- Making
3. Stress Reduction and Coping Mechanism
4. Supportive Community and Connection

Tarot reading serves as a canvas for self-reflection, encouraging individuals to delve into their emotions, experiences and aspirations. The symbolism within the cards prompts introspection, potentially nurturing self- awareness and a deeper understanding of one’s thoughts and feelings.

The relationship between tarot cards and mental health is intricate, offering both benefits and risks. While tarot readings can promote self-reflection and empowerment, some individuals might experience negative effects. Navigating this relationship necessitates mindfulness, moderation, critical thinking and a keen awareness of personal boundaries. Understanding the nuances of engaging with tarot cards empowers individuals to harness their potential benefits while safeguarding mental well- being. Not only to the clients, but also to the readers, engaging with tarot cards can function as a stress- relief activity to meditation or mindfulness practices. The act of shuffling cards and contemplating their meanings can induce a coping mechanism during challenging times.

Counseling provided by the tarot readers help people relief from depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions. Moreover, counseling also increases confidence and decision making skills. It also improves problem solving and conflict resolution abilities. It can have a profound positive impact, helping individuals develop coping mechanisms, improve communication, manage emotions and enhance overall well- being and mental health.



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Review of Literature

Ivtzan (2007) revealed that the cards, according to paranormal explanation, provide a reflection of the client’s inner process. He further added that the Barnum effect refers to our tendency to interpret general statements whereas cold reading refers to a set of deceptive psychological techniques that are being used in psychic reading to create impression.

Sarah Low May Poh (2021) found that with the use of tarot card, one may ascertain what stands in the path of achievement adding that tarot cards are beneficial for mental health since they give insight into one’s thoughts and emotions.

Prime Wire (2023) concluded that the relationship between tarot cards and mental health is intricate, offering both benefits and risks. He further added that while tarot readings can promote self- reflection and empowerment, some individuals might experience negative effects.

Gave O’ Brien (2024) concluded that tarot cards can still have beneficial impacts on a person’s mental health and inner psychological process. He further found tarot cards as a way to gain insight into their current life situations mentioning that the cards were found to be the most often during difficult times when they could offer a source of comfort.

Significance of the Study

The study is of great importance to those who are mentally down and frustrated regarding their life problems. This study gives the way how tarot card reading and counseling practice accordingly help people to get motivated by giving guidance and inspiration. The spiritual advice given by the tarot card reading really helps to increase one’s intuition level and motivation. It also gives a second chance to have aspiration to those who have been mentally down and started to have thoughts like committing suicide, giving up their long efforts on something important with mental frustration. The study again can help people to reduce their mental issues regarding life problems by giving them positive advices with the provision of the guidance of how he or she can change their lives according to the steps guided and advice given by the reader. Hence the study is justified with such valuable reasons.

Operational Definitions of the Keywords Used

Tarot Cards- the 78 Rider Waite cards used in occult science

Mental Health- The condition of one’s mental state

Counseling- the talk therapy done by the reader to the clients to give guidance in a positive way

Clients- people who came for tarot reading.

Research Methodology

A qualitative approach was done for a case study on selected 20 numbers of clients using Simple Random Sampling technique under the age group of 20 to 45 years in Imphal, Manipur. Their mental conditions before starting the reading and after the reading were compared.

Data Analysis

1. For the client whose pulled out cards were 7 of swords, ace of pentacles and 10 of pentacles with husband and wife(cheating) case, the wife came with so much of negative thoughts of even committing suicide. The reading was interpreted as the partner is cheating somewhere but it would not take long to have a stable and contented family. After reading, the client felt a tendency to wait for the stability. After 8 days, the problem was resolved and they are stable now. Furthermore for another client whose pulled out cards were the fool, the star and page of swords with relationship problem, the guy came so moody that he even skipped two meals thinking that he was losing his partner. The reading was-the client is foolish,



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careless and not taking any responsibility. So his partner is fed up with this nature only and she is not in other relationship. Hence, he was suggested to change his nature. After the reading, the client was so much happy and decided to change himself. Lastly he reacted smile in place of moody face.

2. For a client whose pulled out cards were Justice, 5 of swords and 2 of swords with a case of conflicts in relationship, the guy came with tears with so much of negative thoughts. The reading was done as emotionless relationship with lots of arguments and lack of communication. It was predicted a very abusive and forceful. Time and space was needed. Shortly another new and beautiful relationship will start with a new person. After the reading, the person was motivated and strengthened to give time and space to the relationship and wait for a new one. Furthermore, for another client with 6 of pentacles, 8 of swords, wheel of fortune as pulled out cards in relationship cheating case, the client was so mentally down that she was not expressing anything. Her companion expressed the details. The reading was that everything would be in her favour if she was right. She was advised to do donation as ritual. The client got smile and starting talking more about her relationship.

3. For a client whose pulled out cards were Death card, 9 of pentacles, 2 of swords in mother- son relationship issue, the mother was so mentally down that she even thought of leaving home and living alone homeless. The reading was that a positive change would happen after maintaining standard and creating lifestyle not serving him better. Advice-be logical, no immediate actions. Crystal Rose quartz and amethyst were given in the form of bracelet. After the reading, she decided to happily follow the advice and not to leave her home. She was emotionally strengthened to live in her house. Furthermore, for another client whose pulled out cards were 10 of swords, empress, judgement and knight of cups with relationship problem, the guy came with hand injury caused by himself because of uncontrollable mental distractions. The reading was ending of pain was happening. After that a new chapter was going to start. She would come back to him when he gave her space. After the reading, the guy got happy and decided to wait for her after giving her space.

4. For a client whose pulled out cards were Justice, 5 of swords, 2 of swords in relationship issues, the guy was so angry. He was so arrogant and stubborn. A high headedness was observed from him. The reading was that there was lack of communication, abusiveness and forcefulness from his side. Advice- change your attitude, everything will be okay. After the reading, the client was so excited to receive the predicted change and he started changing attitude immediately. Furthermore, for a client whose pulled out cards were Death card, 9 of pentacles, 2 of swords, page of wands in relationship(husband and wife) issue, the client was so depressed that she felt hopeless of surviving. An extra relationship intervention was predicted. Ritual was suggested to get rid of it. It was predicted a very stable relationship after that. After the reading, she said that she felt a sense of living.

5. For a client whose pulled out cards were 5 of swords, 2 of swords, 7 of cups in husband and wife problem, the wife was so much depressed and even having suicidal thoughts. The wife was so much depressed and even having suicidal thoughts. The reading was that he was feeling stuck in the relationship, lots of conflicts had been created. Advice- stay to your parental home sometimes to give him space and understand your value in your absence. Ritual suggested. She felt motivated and inspiration after the reading. Furthermore for a client whose pulled out cards were hierophant, strength card, two of pentacles and 5 of wands in career issue, the client was so mentally down and upset because her husband was so tensed and worried about the working job that he even forgot his family responsibility. The reading was that conflicts in the work place were there. Advice- be competitive and never feel to give up. Nothing unwanted will happen after a ritual. The wife was so happy and became emotionally and mentally stronger after the reading.

6. For a client whose pulled out cards were queen of cups, 7 of pentacles, strength card in mother daughter relationship issue, the girl was too much emotional. The reading was that she was emotionally sensitive to over mother behavior and so spiritual as well. Advice- wait for a good relation after a suggested ritual. The girl was free from stress and got a smile after the reading. Furthermore, for a client whose pulled out cards were 5 of wands, the fool, 7 of wands in husband and wife conflicts, the husband showed irritability towards the relationship. The reading was that there were conflicts, no commitment in the relationship, the client has immaturity. Advice- change yourself to get a better relationship. The client showed relaxed about the relationship after the reading.



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7. For a client whose pulled out cards were the magician, king of wands, page of pentacles in relationship issue, the client was so depressed, he was in a dilemma. The reading was that the partner was having no emotions, staying so stubborn. Everything would be fine after 2 weeks. It was all because of planetary positions. After the reading, the client showed relaxed and decided to wait for the time. Furthermore, for a client whose pulled out card were 10 of swords in black magic check, the client was mentally abnormal. He was having hallucinations. The reading was that the client was having an influence of black magic. Three days after a ritual, he was recovering day by day.

8. For a client, whose pulled out cards were the emperor, 6 of pentacles and 9 of pentacles, the client was so tensed that he could not study properly for the examination. The reading was that the relationship would be balancing, sorting out any problem soon. After the reading, the client became tension free immediately and got a smile. Furthermore, for another client, whose pulled out cards were the star, queen of cups, 4 of pentacles and 9 of pentacles in betrayal case, the guy was stressed and depressed thinking that his partner was having affair with another. The reading was that she was indulged in unnecessary things, not having external affair. After the reading, the guy felt so relaxed.

9. For a person whose pulled out cards were strength, 3 of pentacles in workplace issue, the guy felt so manipulated and hopeless. The reading was that he was manipulated in the workplace. He is advised to take help and advice from mutual friends. Advice -Team work and co-operation is needed. The guy, after following the advices, felt relaxed. Furthermore, the client whose pulled out cards were 4 of swords, 7 of cups and 9 of swords in black magic energy checking, he was so fearful and full of negative thoughts. There is no black magic energy. Everything happens because of his own negative thinking. Need to consult a psychiatrist. The reading was that there was no black magic energy. Everything happens because of his own negative thinking. He needed to consult a psychiatrist. Amethyst crystal was given as bracelet. After the reading he guy felt so light knowing that there was no black magic. He assured to consult a doctor.

10. For the client whose pulled out cards were empress, 7 of pentacles in infertility issue, the guy felt so fed up of waiting. He started having mental trauma thinking that he could never be a father. The reading was that he would have a baby soon but he needed to wear crystal along with some rituals. After the reading, he was so happy and excited to follow the advice. A baby boy was born to him now. Furthermore, for the client whose pulled out cards were 10 of wands, 8 of pentacles and queen of pentacles, the woman expressed her tendency to commit suicide in money related issue. The reading was that she was working hard alone without any help. Then, she was very tired and started losing hope but she would get the fruit of what she had invested.

Discussion of the study

From the above data, a huge difference in the mental condition of clients could be observed before and after tarot card reading. Tarot cards can act as a tool to enhance one's inner self and guide them to be better in terms of mental wellbeing. The counseling practices offered by tarot are of much valuable to the clients that after every counseling practice, the client's negativity in their minds could be reduced. It was further found that the remedies provided by tarot- may be ritual or crystal healing was so much helpful in controlling ones mental health.

Devra Sullivan (2024) revealed that the use of tarot readings for mental health is not well studied. However Jenna Fletcher (2021) also suggested that popular belief systems or practices such as those involving astrology may help reduce stress and anxiety when you feel uncertain or sense of lack of control. Whereas, Frank Krueger, Jerina Fletcher, Greenaway, Louis, Hornsey (2013) indicated that belief in the ability to predict the future may be used to help someone gain a sense of control. However, this can become unhealthy if you constantly search for answers to reduce feelings of uncertainty.

Suggestions

- It is necessary to always care for our words to be used to the clients. Most of the clients are ready to be made destined with the readers words.
- While doing tarot card reading, it is important to make the environment silent without any disturbance since silence enhances the reader's intuitive power which is so important to give guidance for their mental condition.



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- Counseling should be given maintaining privacy and respecting dignity of the clients.
- It is important to always maintain privacy while doing card reading of the client so that the reader can understand the real ins and outs of the client.

Conclusion

As tarot card acts as a tool to guide people to have a better mental health, tarot can be used as means of maintaining a good and proper mental condition. It is applicable in all types of persons with any kinds of mental challenge. Tarot gives a chance to provide counseling to the clients for creating positive thoughts by predicting their abilities and outcome accordingly. Moreover, the healing practices such as rituals and crystal use could provide positive feedback towards keeping good mental health of the clients.

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