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SELF-CONFIDENCE AS A FACTOR OF THE GENERAL ATTITUDE TO THE DOCTOR'S AND PSYCHOLOGIST'S PROFESSIONS

Summary

A part of the findings of the empirical research by which we tried to establish the sources that influence the formation of the general attitude to the doctor's and psychologist's professions is shown in this paper. We were interested in investigating if self-confidence and socio-empirical characteristics are statistically significant determinants of the formation of these attitudes. We also thought that it would be interesting to see at which profession positive attitudes are more directed.

In the qualitative analysis of the gathered attitudes it was ascertained that the respondents more often have a negative attitude towards the doctor's and psychologist's professions. It was also ascertained that the attitude towards the doctor's profession is much more positive than towards the psychologist's profession. Regarding the differences in the general attitudes towards the doctor's and psychologist's professions, and considering self-confidence, it was ascertained that there is a statistically important difference in the obtained results (Chi-square=193,885; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.704) and (Chi-square=162,573; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.672), which means that self-confidence is an important factor of the formation of the general attitude towards both the psychologist's and doctor's professions.

Key words: self-confidence, self-efficacy, attitude, prejudices.

INTRODUCTION

It seems that the aspirations of the individual's life require a certain level of self-confidence, self-evaluation, something that he can and should do in order to reach a certain goal.

To take some activities, doubtless, what is needed is motivation, which in certain terms, runs the aspiration and makes it possible. Self-confidence, comparing to other factors, is not quintessence¹, because life does not essentially depend on it. However, we can recognize its importance when we speak about quality of life itself. During lifetime, mature individual confronts with different problems, starting with school education, employment, getting married, making family and so on. Right here, importance of researching self-confidence and its influence, above else on some attitudes, can be seen.

Through Adler's concept of feeling of inferiority, every individual, since birth, has need to take over living space of others in his surroundings (in terms of giving and receiving love, attracting attention of other people and similar examples), fighting others for supremacy. In this context, one about primal circle of socialisation, individuals will have positive or negative experience, which will be reflected through their self-confidence. Relying on the socially oriented psychoanalytical theory and Bandura's social cognitive theory, emphasis

will be on the first years of childhood, not excluding importance of future life experiences. Due to motivation and suppression by parents or other relatives, children in their early age develop or suppress motivation, aspiration and self-confidence through their successes and failures.

In an effort to define the meaning of term self-confidence, we face the problem of its determination, which many authors recognize. Self-confidence is best expressed by phrase "I Can". That is why it is often connected with term of self-efficacy. Experience of competence in behaviour directed toward a specific goal is the basic mechanism of human activity that Bandura (1991) defines as self-efficacy. Speaking about self-regulatory mechanism, the author lists several basic sub-functions: behavioural self-perception and its evaluation regarding to personal standards, affective self-correction. Using his experimental research, Bandura (1982) shows that the higher level of induced self-efficacy is connected to higher level of achievements and lower level of emotional motives.

Self-confidence is relatively important component of person's integrity. It consists of cognitive and affective contents, and basically "I" (Ego) has cognitive and affective balance directed towards goal that has to be achieved. The level of trust in self is dependent on success of resolving basic life issues such as education, love, marriage, profession, social status and so on. Success in these intensions, and approval of other people, has big influence on building of self-confidence. In lots of theoretical views, eventual loss of self-confidence is marked as beginning of personality conflicts.

Rijavec and Miljkovic (1999) quote that self-confidence allows us to use existing abilities and personality traits in best possible ways. Further on, they quote that self-confidence generally refers to the feeling that we have about ourselves and our values, and a sense of competent to deal with all of life's challenges. According to Barjaktarević (2004) selfconfidence includes everything, the way individual thinks, feels and acts.

Psychotherapist Nathaniel Branden (1969) who has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the concepts of self-esteem and self-confidence says that a man is ruled by fear as much as he lacks self-esteem. It is the fear of the reality in which individual feels inadequate, fear of fact about himself which he avoids or suppresses.

He considers that self-confidence consists of two basic elements: self-consciousness (believing in own abilities) and self-respect (feeling of personal value). According to him, self-confidence is developing trough process of executing different actions and evaluation of their results which we receive from the environment. We continuously compare received with our expected results, results which others expected and results that others achieved.

In considerations of benefits of self-confidence, Barjaktarevic (2004) quotes that it can help individual to: form positive emotions, keep concentration, set goals, overcome efforts and creating of strategy in decisive psychological moments. Further on, even if self-confidence is crucial element of effect, it implies pre-existence of other important elements, such as skills, abilities, etc.

Bandura's social-cognitive theory defines behaviour as triadic, reciprocal interaction between personality factors, behaviour and social environment context. These factors don't have equal strength, or impact on behaviour. Influence of certain factors depends on person itself, as on specific situation in which behaviour takes place. Speaking of self-efficacy, Bandura (1986) defines it as capacity for organisation and activities that are needed for overcoming actual situation. It is more likely to successfully accomplish action when faith in success is present, when we have a high self-efficacy or confidence. In his study of self-efficacy, which is considered to be the main interface between behaviour and changes in

behaviour, Bandura believes that an individual can control their thoughts, feelings and actions, but it's not an easy task and that it can help human knowledge and skills. Heslin and Klehe (2006) argue that low self-esteem can produce that particular tasks or activities perform with difficulties, while people with high self-esteem try to see obstacles as an opportunity to show what they are able to do, which will give them the enthusiasm that they could do it.

Since we searched for sources of general attitude toward professions of psychologists and doctors, we consider that is important to explain the term of attitude, in this study. When it comes to attitudes, Rot (1977) argues that the nature of the attitude that affects almost all our mental functions: perception, judgment and reasoning, and emotional reactions to our action. A large part of our attitudes become part of our personality. Research shows that information that is consistent with our attitudes is learned better and faster and those that are in conflict with them are harder to learn and remember.

Dunderović (2004) speaks about prejudice as attitudes which are not based on facts or justified reasons. Those attitudes regularly exaggerate emotional component and it is very difficult to change them. Prejudices are very rigid and resistant to data that are contrary to the generalizations which they contain. Like other attitudes, prejudices are acquired through social learning, usually by learning model.

The subject of this empirical study is to examine and determine the nature of students' attitudes towards the profession of psychologists and doctors, through the prism of self-esteem as a personality trait in a narrow sense and socially experienced signatures. In other words, the research seeks to determine how students assess their self-esteem and how it is reflected in the formation of the general attitude of the profession of psychologists and doctors. We are interested in whether and how much self-confidence, as a personality factor, affects positive attitudes towards the profession of psychologists and doctors. Also, we thought it was interesting to see which professions have positive attitudes more focused, and their sources.

The aim of the research is to examine and analyze the psychological and socio-empirical characteristics as the factors which determine the attitudes towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions, and at the same time to observe the regularity of the distribution of data among variables, ie. to ascertain the direction and intensity of their association.

THE METHOD OF WORK

The sample of respondents

The research includes the sample of 202 students of the first, second, third and fourth years of study at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Law in Pale. Out of the total number of received questionnaires, five questionarres were excluded from the further processing because of the obviously frivolous filling, so the complete sample has 197 respondents. It is an appropriate sample, and the faculties were selected on the basis of their accessibility. The structure of the sample concerning the gender, the year of study, the faculty and the place where childhood and early youth were spent is shown in the Table 1. The questionnares were given to the group of students who willingly agreed to take part in the research.

Table 1. *The structure of the sample*

	f	%
Gender		
Male	51	25,88
Female	146	74,11
Year of the study		
First	69	35,02
Second	61	30,97
Third	41	20,81
Fourth	26	13,20
Faculty		
Law	74	37,57
Philosophy	123	62,43
Place where childhood and early youth were spent		
Village	14	7,11
Small town	80	40,61
City	103	52,28

Research techniques and instruments

In accordance with the nature of the problem and with the aim of the research we decided to apply the method of the theoretical analysis of the primary and secondary sources and the method of systematic non-experimental research or the survey method. The technique used in this research is the survey, that is, the questionnare.

The questionnare consists of three parts: the first part is general and it consists of four socio-empirical questions. The second part consists of two five-degree Likert-type scales, and they consist of a total of 36 items incorporated in one scale, for which the respondents expressed the degree of the positive/negative attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions. This scale was constructed by the students at the Department of Psychology (the generation of 2002/2003) at the Faculty of Philosophy in Pale under the mentorship of Professor Ratko Dunđerović, PhD. The third integral part of this questionnare is the scale for the examining the degree of self-confidence (according to Dunđerović, 2004).

The scale for the examining the attitude towards the psychologist's profession was reduced from the original 18 items to 11 because of the ascertained low reliability of a certain number of items. The internal homogeneity of the scale, expressed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, is 0.800, which is a satisfactory level of scale reliability. The scale for the examining the attitude towards the doctor's profession was reduced from the original 18 to 11 items, also because of the ascertained low reliability of a certain number of items. The internal homogeneity of the scale for the attitude towards the doctor's profession is 0.715, which indicates a satisfactory level of scale reliability. The scale for self-confidence consists of 30 items. The internal homogeneity of the scale is 0.996, which indicates a satisfactory level of scale reliability.

Data processing was performed using the computer and the SPSS pack for statistical data processing, and various statistical procedures were applied: measuring mean values and the

deviations from them, testing the differences amog the segments of intersected variables using a χ^2 test and C coefficient – the coefficient of contingency or the measure of the association among variables.

THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In this part of the research paper we will present the survey of obtained results, that is, the attitudes towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions. First of all, we will discuss the distribution of the attitudes towards these professions and then the nature of the connection between the observed personality trait in a narrow sense (self-confidence) and discovered attitudes. Also, we will discuss the nature of the connection between obtained attitudes and socio-empirical characteristics.

By the analysis of the assertions that constitute the scale of the attitudes towards the psychologist's profession an extent is ascertained that ranges from 1.37 to 3.52, with the first two assertions having somewhat higher scale value in relation to the others, which is shown in Table 2.

Tabela 2. General opinion about psychologist's profession

		Degree of agreement				
Assertions		I completely agree	I mostly agree	I am indecisive	I mostly disagree	I completely disagree
		f	f	f	f	f
		%	%	%	%	%
Most psychologists has lost touch with everyday life.	3,52	12	17	68	56	44
Wost psychologists has lost touch with everyday life.	3,32	6,1	8,6	34,5	28,4	22,3
It is much more useful to talk to a preist, then to a	much more useful to talk to a preist, then to a				36	42
psychologist.	3,45	4,1	8,1	48,2	18,3	21,3
We can not speak openly and with so much confidence with	2,79	23	41	44	50	39
anyone else but psychologist.	2,19	11,7	20,8	22,3	25,4	19,8
In life, the psychology is much more needed than it is	2.10	5	15	48	73	56
considered.	2,19	2,5	7,6	24,4	37,1	28,4
Psychological books and magazines are useful and should be	2.15	3	20	35	84	55
read regularly.	2,15	1,5	10,2	17,8	42,6	27,9
Knowledge of psychology helps more complete	2.05	6	13	27	89	62
understanding of each other's actions.	2,05	3,0	6,6	13,7	45,2	31,5
Psychology as a subject, should be introduced in all	1.05	12	12	27	50	96
secondary schools.	1,95	6,1	6,1	13,7	25,4	48,7
Psychologist, with his questions, can make people realize	1.00	0	9	30	90	68
their own problems and find their solution.	1,90	0	4,6	15,2	45,7	34,5
Psychological counseling could help to solve the problems	1.05	2	7	21	96	71
of many people.	1,85	1,0	3,6	10,7	48,7	36,0
Every school, hospital and factory should have a	1.55	6	11	19	57	104
psychologist.	1,77	3,0	5,6	9,6	28,9	52,8
People feel better when they know that someone	1.25	1	3	7	45	141
understands them and can help in overcoming the problem.	1,37	0,5	1,5	3,6	22,8	71,6

High scale value of the first assertion shows that every other respondent "completely" and "tend to agree", that prejudice "Most psychologists have lost touch with everyday life", is not standing. That is expressed by only every seventh respondent. The following assertion is "It is

much more useful to talk to a priest then the to a psychologist" and it is answered "completely" and "tend to agree" by only 12% of respondents. It is indicative that almost every second respondent shows undecided attitude about this. It is rejected "completely" and "tend to agree" by nearly 40% of respondents. The least accepted attitude in the scale relates to affirmative attitude that "People feel better when they know that someone understands them and when they can help in overcoming the problems". This claim has been completely rejected by 71.6% of respondents, while only 0.5% completely agree with the statement.

By the analysis of the assertions that constitute the scale of attitudes towards the doctor's profession an extent is ascertained that ranges from 1.80 to 4.22, the first two assertions having somewhat higher scale value in relation to the others, which is shown in Table 3.

Tabela 3. The general attitude towards the doctor's profession

			Degree of agreement			
Assertions		I completely agree	I mostly agree	I am indecisive	I mostly disagree	I completely disagree
		f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
It is better to visit herbalists than doctors.	4,22	3 1,5	2 1,0	34 17,3	67 34,0	91 46,2
Only idle people often visit doctors.	3,72	9 4,6	22 11,2	52 26,4	47 23,9	67 34,0
The doctor's profession is overestimated today.	3,32	19 9,6	22 11,2	66 33,5	57 28,9	33 16,8
A huge percentage of people solve their problems successfully without a doctor's advice.	3,12	23 11,7	38 19,3	47 23,9	70 35,5	19 9,6
Doctors don't see a human in people, but just another patient.	3,12	32 16,2	26 13,2	56 28,4	53 26,9	30 15,2
One should have more confidence in oneself than in doctors.	3,02	25 12,7	39 19,8	47 23,9	57 28,9	29 14,7
Nowadays even the most harmless operation carries great risk.	2,59	55 27,9	48 24,4	33 16,8	45 22,8	16 8,1
Our doctors very often formulate a wrong diagnosis.	2,47	46 23,4	62 31,5	49 24,9	31 15,7	9 4,6
Doctors inspire great trust.	2,45	9 4,6	19 9,6	58 29,4	77 39,1	34 17,3
The basis of medicine should be introduced as a subject in all secondary schools.		10 5,1	11 5,6	43 21,8	46 23,4	87 44,2
Medical books are full of useful advice.	1,80	6 3,0	3 1,5	14 7,1	96 48,7	78 39,6

The obtained results suggest that more than 80% of the respondents mostly and completely disagree with the statement that it is better to visit herbalists than doctors, whereas about 2% of them agree with this assertion. Also, the statement that only idle people often visit doctors is significantly rejected (50% and more). What is also indicative is the opinion that our doctors very often formulate a wrong diagnosis, with which every second respondent mostly and completely agree, whereas this kind of statement is completely rejected by less than 5% of the respondents. Almost 45% of the respondents completely disagree with the statement that the basis of medicine should be introduced as a subject in all secondary schools.

The least accepted assertion is that medical books are full of useful advice, with which more than 85% of the respondents mostly and completely disagree, whereas little more than 4% of the respondents completely agree.

On the basis of the results a conclusion can be drawn that the prejudices about both the psychologist's and doctor's professions are expressed to a small extent since the respondents have the main insights into psychologists not having lost the connection to everyday life, as well as into it being better to visit doctors than herbalists. It is noticeable that the respondents lack the confidence in competences, especially doctors', which is expressed by every second respondent's opinion that our doctors very often formulate a wrong diagnosis and that nowadays even the most harmless operation carries great risk. What is also present is the respondents' low motivation for informing themselves about and acquainting themselves with the complexity of these professions as well as with the fields of work in which they are very needed. This is expressed by the situation where only every tenth respondent says that he or she completely and mostly agrees with the opinion that every school, hospital and factory should have a psychologist, as well as with the opinion that medical books are full of useful advice, which has been accepted by little less than 5% of the respondents.

The obtained results shown in Charts 1 and 2 show that a large number of the respondents (70%) prominently and mostly has a negative attitude towards the psychologist's profession. On the other hand, a positive attitude has been expressed by only 5% of the respondents. Contrary to this, the general attitude towards the doctor's profession has been expressed relatively uniformly, with the insignificant prevalence of a positive attitude. A positive attitude towards the doctor's profession (every third respondent) has been expressed six times more frequently in relation to the attitude towards the psychologist's proffesion (almost every eighteenth respondent).

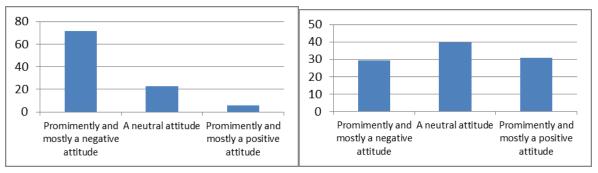


Chart 1. Categories of the general attitude towards the psychologist's profession

Chart 2. Categories of the general attitude towards the doctor's profession

The answer to the question of why the respondents define the doctor's profession more positively can be sought in accessibility, that is, in the everyday reliance on this profession. On the other hand, psychology as a science and practice is relatively young, and insufficiently affirmed and accessible. The reasons for the negative attitude towards the doctor's profession, which has also been expressed, can be sought, among other things, in the health care system. Besides "doctors often formulating a wrong diagnosis," with which every second respondent agrees, the system requests the individual to financially participate on the every occasion of examination and intervention, which can create a more negative picture about this profession.

By the analysis of the obtained results and the ascertained differences between the intensity of self-confidence and the general attitude towards the psychologist's profession, we can state that the results have shown a certain regularity of distribution, which is also confirmed by the

statistical procedures which suggest the connectedness of the variables (*Chi-square*=193.885; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.704), which is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *Self-confidence and the general attitude towards the psychologist's profession*

		General attitude t			
Intensity of self-confidence		Promimently and mostly a negative attitude	A neutral attitude	Promimently and mostly a positive attitude	Total
Prominently strong and strong	Count	0	17	11	61
self-confidence	%	0.0	60.7	39.3	100.0
Moderate self-confidence	Count	13	28	0	41
	%	31.7	68.3	0.0	100.0
Prominently weak and weak	Count	128	0	0	128
self-confidence	%	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	Count	141	45	11	197
	%	71.6	22.8	5.6	100.0

By the analysis of the obtained results and the ascertained differences between the intensity of self-confidence and the general attitude towards the doctor's profession, statistical procedures say that the data has shown a statistically significant connectedness of the variables (*Chisquare*=162.573; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.672), which is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Self-confidence and the general attitude towards the doctor's profession*

		General attitud				
Intensity of self-confidence		Promimently and mostly a negative attitude	A neutral attitude	Promimently and mostly a positive attitude	Total	
Prominently strong and	Count	28	0	0	28	
strong self-confidence	%	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	
Moderate self-confidence	Count	30	11	0	41	
	%	73.2	26.8	0.0	100.0	
Prominently weak and weak	Count	0	67	61	128	
self-confidence	%	0.0	52.3	47.7	100.0	
Total	Count	58	78	61	197	
	%	29.4	39.6	31.0	100.0	

By the analysis of the obtained results by intersecting socio-empirical variables and the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions, it is ascertained that there are no statistically significant values that suggest a connection, that is, the influence of these variables on the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions.

DISCUSSION

The subject of the research is observing and ascertaining the nature of students' attitudes towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions through the prism of self-confidence as a personality factor, and of social status symbols. We deemed it interesting to see towards which profession positive attitudes are more inclined and which are the sources of that. In the scope of psychological determinants we tried to ascertain if and how much self-confidence, as a personality factor, influences what attitude an individual will have towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions. We defined self-confidence as one's confidence in oneself and one's abilities. It is composed of cognitive and affective contents, and in the basis lies I (Ego) that has a cognitive and affective balance directed towards the aim which is to be

achieved. How much confidence in oneself one will have will depend on the success in solving the basic life problems such as love, marriage, profession, social position and the like

The success in these intentions, and acknowledgement by other people will strongly affect self-confidence and its strengthening.

In the qualitative analysis of the attitudes towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions it is ascertained that the respondents more often have a negative attitude towards these professions. The positive attitude towards the psychologist's profession has been expressed by only 5% of the respondents, whereas concerning the doctor's profession such attitude has been expressed by more than 30% of the respondents. The results concerning the psychologist's profession have shown a certain regularity of distribution, which means that the stronger self-confidence is, the more positive the attitude is, as well as the weaker selfconfidence is, the more prominent the negative attitude is. This distribution of data has shown that there is a statistically significant difference between the ones with strong and the ones with weak self-confidence (Chi-square=193.885; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.704). Contrary to this, by comparing the data concerning the doctor's profession and self-confidence an opposite distribution has been ascertained, that is, the respondents with stronger selfconfidence more often had a more negative attitude towards the doctor's profession and the respondents with weaker self-confidence more often had a more positive attitude towards this profession. This statistically significant difference in the distribution of data is shown by statistical procedures (Chi-square=162.573; df=4; p<0.01; C coeff.=0.672). We remark that in both cases there has not been the adequate cell saturation, which could affect the obtained results, so they can be accepted as such only relatively.

The data that we have analyzed suggests that the self-confidence as a factor that influences a more positive general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions can also be discussed in the sense of statistical significance. Furthermore, the data that we have obtained can help with the better observation of the nature of the connection between the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions and other important factors such as the elementary family, the quality of the relationship with peers and social environment in general, the social character that consists of the traits that are common to the majority of the members of a society, and the like.

On the basis of the observation of the mutual connection between psychological determinants and the intensity of the general attitude towards the psychologist's profession and the doctor's profession we can conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, socio-empirical determinants have not shown a statistically significant difference. From the distribution of data it follows that inner factors influence the positivity of the attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions, whereas the influence of psychosocial factors on the positivity of the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions can only be discussed, but its presence cannot be confirmed.

Only a snapshot of the problem is given with this research, so we think that it is necessary to research more extensively the influence of self-confidence on some aspects of life and also on the forming of the attitudes towards some subjects. Furthermore, a question is raised of why the respondents grade the psychologist's profession more negatively and why the trust in the doctor's profession is missing, whether those reasons can be found in the malfunctioning of the health care system, that is, of institutional solutions, or whether they should be looked for in competences and the educational system. The individual's need for a coordinate system, that is, for an orientational frame, for that which is embedded in human nature, for a stable way of perceiving and comprehending the world, leads to the situation where the individual takes different patterns of action checking them empirically. Consequently, almost every third

respondent expresses the affirmative opinion that "a huge percentage of people solve their problems successfully without a doctor's advice," which could contribute to a more negative attitude towards the doctor's profession.

A more negative attitude towards the psychologist's profession could result from the insufficient presence of this profession in everyday life and "reservedness" towards it, which is expressed through the opinion that "psychological books and magazines are useful and should be read regularly," which has been rejected by 70% of the respondents. What nevertheless leaves a positive impression in the perception of the psychologist's profession is a hint of the trust in the psychologist's work, which is recognized in the opinion that "one cannot talk openly and with such confidence with anyone as one can with a psychologist," which has been graded positively by every third respondent. Also, this statement has been graded most positively in relation to the other statements.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to come to the determinants which influence what attitude an individual will assume towards certain subjects, in this case towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions, we come to the conclusions that these differences manifested themselves, that the null hypothesis is rejected, i.e. that self-confidence as a personality factor has shown a statistically significant difference in the presented data. Furthermore, socio-empirical characteristics, in relation to the attitudes towards the doctor's and psychologist's professions, have not shown statistically significant differences.

The data that we have analyzed suggests that the self-confidence as a factor that influences the forming of the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions can be discussed in the sense of statistical significance. We think that by a wider research, which would include the elementary family, the quality of the relationship with peers and social environment in general, the social character which consists of the traits that are common to the majority of the members of a society, and the like, higher-quality data would be obtained which can help with the better observation of the nature of the connection in the general attitude towards the psychologist's and doctor's professions and with the better statement saturation in some cells

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