



PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE NEW GENERATION OF STUDENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to outline a psychological profile of the new generation of students in psychology by determining some defining aspects of the psychologist's personality, generally, such as the level of empathy, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and locus of control. The study focused on 108 undergraduate students of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Hyperion University of Bucharest, both male and female, aged between 19 and 52 years old. Participants were asked to complete a test battery consisting of Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy – QMEE, Goleman Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, Self-Efficacy Scale – SES and Rotter Locus of Control Scale. The findings showed that the general profile of the psychological students participating in the study is outlined by a higher proportion of females, an average age of 28.1 years, a low level of empathy, a medium level of emotional intelligence, a medium level of self-efficacy and the presence of an external locus of control.

Keywords: *psychologist, empathy, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, locus of control*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Romanian academical space, research on psychologists has grown. Whether it is the implementation of some methods of developing the qualities of psychologists (Biceva, 2015; Pascaru-Goncar, 2017; Vancea, 2015) or simply about shaping some general aspects of them (Bogluț, Rizeanu, Burtăverde, 2015; Losii, 2014; Manzat & Tanase Manzat, 2000; Triboi, 2013), the number of studies is steadily increasing.

There is a popular conception of how a psychologist should be. Empathic, first

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of all, with a high emotional intelligence, good speaking, calm, self-confident, without too many unresolved problems, capable etc.

We have proposed that this study should complete the construction of the psychologist's image in general and answer the question: How is the next generation of future psychologists? Thus, we chose to evaluate the level of empathy, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and the locus of control in psychologist students.

Regarding the empathy of the psychologist, Goleman (1995) states that an effective psychologist is an empathic psychologist. Through empathy, the psychologist approaches the client's feelings and emotions, and empathizing generally leads to the elimination of defense mechanisms.

It is difficult to admit that a person with low emotional intelligence may be able to be empathic with another person. To be able to understand the emotions of the other, it is necessary to be able to properly express one's own emotions to perceive each other's (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence is one of the most important defining parameters for professional success. It defines a set of abilities that are different but complementary to the logical and cognitive abilities measured by the intelligent coefficient. It is important to note that the abilities of emotional intelligence can be taught and developed throughout life. They are an integrated system that can be found at individual, group and organization level and have an immediate effect of optimizing communication, cooperation and efficiency at all these levels. The development of emotional intelligence allows us to highlight our intellectual skills, creativity, ensure success, both personally and professionally (Losii, 2014; Rizeanu, Gatej, Ciolacu, 2017).

Self-efficacy influences choices about the activities in which a person engages, the willingness of the individual to work and persevere in performing tasks, affective responses and responses to stress and work performance (Betz, 2000).

People with a high degree of self-efficacy set high goals, put more effort and give more time to a difficult task (Bandura, 1997).

Research on the self-efficacy construct has determined that people with a high level achieve better results in the current occupation, achieve more successful careers, are more satisfied with both their work and their lives in general, have a lower level of stress, adapts more efficiently in challenging conditions and makes more effective use of the benefits and opportunities (Bubulac, Gatej, Rizeanu, 2018; Judge et al., 2008).

The locus of control is the degree to which people expect to achieve their desired goals. It is the degree to which they attribute their behavior to external causality, such as environmental factors, or internal causality, such as their own decisions (Rizeanu, 2016; Rotter, 1966).

Krampen (1988) attributes to locus of internal control, the notion of efficient. According to him, people with an internal locus of control are characterized by high activism, inventiveness, quick decision and high responsibility. These people have great confidence in their own abilities, feeling independent of other people or situations. On the other hand, people with an external locus of control are unsafe and passive when confronted with ambiguous or unexpected situations. They can be distinguished by low self-esteem, dependence on others, and trust in luck and fate.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this research is to identify levels of empathy, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and locus of control in psychological students.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

- We assume that psychologist students have a high level of empathy.
- We assume that psychologist students have an increased emotional intelligence.
- We assume that psychologist students have a high level of self-efficacy.
- We assume that psychologist students have an internal locus of control.

3. METHOD

This research involved the participation of 108 students in psychology, first, second and the third year, at the Hyperion University of Bucharest, male and female, aged between 19 and 52 years.

We used the following measures: Questionnaire Measurement of Emotional Empathy (Mehrabian, Epstein, 1972), Goleman Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Goleman, 1995), Self-Efficacy Scale – SES (Ierusalim, Schwarzer, 1981) and the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966).

Questionnaire Measurement of Emotional Empathy - QMEE (Mehrabian, Epstein, 1972) contains 33 items that capture empathy and emotional behavior. The answer to each statement is given on a scale of +4, strong agreement, to -4, strong disagreement.

Goleman Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Goleman, 1995) presents 10 scenarios in which any person can be found at any given time. Each item is accompanied by four variants of response. Scoring is based on a table that divides the score according to the answer.

Self-Efficacy Scale – SES (Ierusalim, Schwarzer, 1981) contains 10 items and is designed to assess the person's beliefs about their ability to cope with the

difficulties encountered during the task. The 10 items have four variants of answer as follows: "totally untrue as far as I am concerned", "largely untrue as far as I am concerned", "for the most part true of me", "Perfectly true as far as I am concerned". The score is obtained by adding the score of the 10 items.

The Rotter Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) aims to determine the internal or external locus of control. The test comprises 29 items and the score can range from 0 to 23 points. A score of less than 8 points indicates an internal locus of control, and a score of more than 8 points indicates an external locus of control.

4. RESULTS

The results showed that the general profile of the psychological students participating in the study is outlined by a higher proportion of females, an average age of 28.1 years, a low level of empathy, a medium level of emotional intelligence, a medium level of self-efficacy and the presence of an external locus of control.

According to the calculation of the relative frequencies for the gender variable, 37% of the study participants were male and 63% female.

Table 1-Frequency for male and female

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	68	63.0	63.0	63.0
	Male	40	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

The minimum age of the study participants is 19 years, the maximum age is 52 years, and the mean is 28.1 years.

Table 2-Descriptive statistics for age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	108	19	52	28.10
Valid N	108			

Relative frequencies for the QMEE test results have shown that 99.01% of participants had a low level of empathy, while 0.9% of participants had good empathy. According to these results, the hypothesis that assumes that psychological students have a high level of empathy is denied, confirming the null hypothesis.

Table 3-Frequency for empathy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Good empathy	1	.9	.9	.9
	Low empathy	107	99.1	99.1	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

In terms of emotional intelligence, Goleman Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire test results showed that 48.1% of study participants have emotional intelligence below average, and 51.9% of them have emotional intelligence at an average level.

According to these results, the hypothesis that assumes that psychological students have a high level of emotional intelligence is confirmed.

Table 4 - Frequency for emotional intelligence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below average	52	48.1	48.1	48.1
	Average	56	51.9	51.9	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Self-Efficacy Scale results showed that most study participants, 34.3%, have an average level of self-efficacy. While an equal percentage of 23.1% was recorded for, on the first hand, the low level and on the other hand the high level of self-efficacy; 9.3% of participants have a very low level of self-efficacy, while 10.2% have a very high level.

The results shows that the hypothesis that assumes that psychological students have a high level of self-efficacy is denied, confirming the null hypothesis.

Table 5 - Frequency for self-efficacy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low level	10	9.3	9.3	9.3
	Low level	25	23.1	23.1	32.4
	Medium level	37	34.3	34.3	66.7
	High level	25	23.1	23.1	89.8
	Very high level	11	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

As far as the locus of control is concerned, the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale results showed that 57% of the participants have an external locus of control and 42.6% have an internal locus of control.

According to the results, the hypothesis that assumes that psychological students have an internal locus of control is denied, confirming the null hypothesis.

Table 6-Frequency for locus of control

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Internal	46	42.6	42.6	42.6
	External	62	57.4	57.4	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research shows that the general profile of the psychological students participating in the study is outlined by a higher proportion of female gender, an average age of 28.1 years, a low level of empathy, an average level of emotional intelligence, an average level of self-efficacy and the presence of an external locus of control.

In contrast to some international studies, where the emphasis is placed either on the differences between some concepts also proposed in this study (Dugi, 2013) or on the relationship between them (Hajloo, 2014) or even on methods of improving them (Al-Darmaki, 2004), our study focused on the concrete drawing of a crude profile of the Romanian student to psychology, which is a solid starting point of some studies to investigate the psychologist student, starting from the knowledge of some qualities and gaps which characterizes it.

Received at: 04.09.2018, Accepted for publication on: 14.09.2018

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