THE IMPACT OF SELF-ESTEEM ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Through the present research we aimed to demonstrate the impact of self-esteem on interpersonal relationships in psychology students. Since interpersonal relationships are a robust area in social psychology, we decided to measure the psychological construct of acceptance of others. We specify that the research data were collected in the fall of 2020, its participants being part of the 3-year samples of the Hyperion University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology, with a total of 122 participating students, they come from both genders.

The results were statistically significant for 4 out of 5 hypotheses (p<0.05), thus these 4 were either fully validated or partially validated, hypothesis 2 being invalidated (p>0.05), as it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the three years of study in terms of self-esteem and acceptance of others.

The first hypothesis, being the most important working hypothesis, was validated (p=0.008 for both self-esteem and acceptance of others), thus demonstrating that students with low levels of self-esteem have high levels of acceptance of others and vice versa.

Keywords: self-esteem. interpersonal relationships, psychology students, accepting others

1. INTRODUCTION

Over time, the human being reaches the apotheosis of its development in all areas (career achievements, family life, intimate-personal relationships, spiritual turmoil, social life, civic activity, etc.) only through the process of communication with other human beings, through a different lifestyle in reference to others. From Adler's perspective, man's well-being is determined both by his ability to love and work and by his ability to create relationships that are based on friendship (Bucun & Antibor, 2013).

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Therefore, we can observe that interpersonal relationships and integration in society mean one of the personal indicators for the quality of life that have a significant and major contribution in the whole accumulation of constituent elements of this construct. Undoubtedly, people have a special need to communicate with others, to relax their behavior born of the desire to be informed and to be aware of all daily events, to act and to be in touch.

There are various reasons why people want to associate and live with others:

• the need for information and the need to always have an activity to perform;

• man is sociable by nature; someone who is completely isolated from society could not come to fulfil himself as a person;

• cohabitation within a group is the foundation of any learning process. From the external and social environment we take over behaviors such as culture: language, reading, writing, routine behaviors, habits and traditions among other fundamental criteria and of utmost importance;

• the human being shows a tendency to affiliate in order to be able to compare himself with others. Therefore, one of the most beneficial benchmarks for our own assessment is the comparison we humans make with others. Certainly, all the qualities and abilities that a man has are compared with those of those around him, in order to be able to determine and establish his relative value

• All people need connections and exchanges.

Social contacts, when they are sustainable, lead to the emergence of a desire for mutual influence, in other words asserted lead to the emergence of processes based on social interaction, as recognized and stable forms of communication within the social level, these are characterized, first of all, through social sustainability, without excluding through it the possibility of changing the types of relationships. Social interactions are essential for the activities of social groups, primarily through the processes that are generated by them (processes with the role of adaptation, with the role of acceptance, with the role of socialization, with the role of cooperation, with the role of opposition, and with the role of conflict, etc.), but secondly by the fact that they are the basis of what we can call a social relationship proper (Lupsa & Bratu, 2006).

Relationships involving partnerships are built and are based on business relationships. The participants in such relationships are allied through a common goal, mediation and purpose that belong to the usual activities in this world. Also, interpersonal relationships according to their character are divided into: official relationships (eg business or work) of people who are bound to express consideration for formal rules, the rules established by an official invested with authority. The world of these relationships is limited and not diverse; intimate-personal relationships (characterized as friendly, familiar, full of love and compassion, companionship), which are not limited by the prescribed formal rules. The world of

the category of these relations is vast, complex and extremely diverse, compared to official relations (Cara, 2019).

Self-esteem is a component of self-assessment and refers to the emotional feelings, emotions that a person experiences when they relate to their own person (Constantin, 2004, apud., Macarie et al., 2007). So, self-esteem is an analysis that we do about ourselves and that can be of various types (globalized or multidimensional, mood or mood, personal or group). For example, in 1979 Rosenberg differentiated between a high level of self-esteem (positive) and a low level of self-esteem (negative).

Lutanen and Crocker, in 1992, refer to self-esteem of a personal nature - with reference to the subjective evaluation of the characteristics that belong exclusively to him and are specific to an individual and self-esteem of a collective nature - with reference to judgments of self-esteem. value nature on the attributes of the collective or collectives with which an individual identifies and resembles. Starting with Rosenberg's famous "Self-Esteem Scale", Heatherton and her colleague Polivy set up a research tool in 1991 to measure general self-esteem as a "trait" and measure self-esteem. as a "state" or temporary (Macarie et al., 2007). Most psychologists explain the concept of self-esteem as a globalized analysis of one's self-worth as an individual. Here we refer to the analysis that a person makes with reference to his own value, in other words, on the level of gratitude towards his own person. (Harter, 1998). The concept of self-esteem can also be defined as an emotional tone of a representation that holds and is part of the concept of self (Tap, 1998). In other words, Rosenberg in 1979 explains the construct of self-esteem as a complex cognitive and affective summary. He believes that the concept called self-esteem is a behavioral predictor that can be more or less good when a person relates to his own person. Baumeister (1998) explains self-esteem using terms that are synonymous with: pride, egocentrism, opulence, narcissism, a variety of a higher nature (Macarie et al., 2007). In other words, we can conclude that self-esteem is a source of energy for people, because it helps them to integrate into social life and is also a source of motivation because the more self-esteem increases the sense of usefulness. grows and thus man becomes an example for those with whom he interacts.

In everyday life, this construct called self-esteem is based on three "ingredients". These 3 ingredients are self-love, self-concept and most importantly, self-confidence. A balanced situation regarding each of these three constructs is absolutely necessary in order to be able to obtain and at the same time have self-esteem in a harmonious and healthy state (Lelord & André, 2003).

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

O1: We propose to show that psychology students, who have a low level of self-esteem, also have a low level of acceptance of others.

O2: We propose to show that there are statistically significant differences between the psychology students of the 3 years of study in the Psychology undergraduate program, in terms of the level of self-esteem, respectively the level of acceptance of others.

O3: We propose to show that there are statistically significant differences between male psychology students and female psychology students in terms of their level of self-esteem and their level of acceptance of others.

O4: We propose to demonstrate that the marital status of psychology students significantly influences the level of self-esteem, respectively the level of acceptance of others, of them.

O5: We propose to show that the age of psychology students significantly influences the level of self-esteem, respectively the level of acceptance of others.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

Working hypotheses of research

H1: We assume that psychology students who have a low level of self-esteem also have an equally low level of acceptance of others, compared to students who have a high level of self-esteem.

H2: We assume that at least one of the groups of the three years of study within the undergraduate program in psychology has statistically significant differences in terms of the level of self-esteem and the level of acceptance of others.

H3: We estimate that married psychologists and students in a relationship have a higher level of self-esteem and a level of acceptance of others, respectively, compared to unmarried and single students.

H4: We assume that male students have lower levels of self-esteem and acceptance of others, compared to female students.

H5: We assume that students over the age of 31 have higher levels of self-esteem and acceptance of others, compared to students under the age of 30.

3. METHOD

Participants

The sample of psychology students was extracted from the students of the Faculty of Psychology within the Hyperion University of Bucharest, all of them being part of the Undergraduate Curriculum, from study years 1, 2 and 3, being a total of 122. Thus 28 of psychology students come from year 1 students, 40 psychology students come from year 2, and 54 psychology students come from year

3. The participation percentage of study year 1 is 23%, year 2, has a percentage of 37 32.8%, while year 3 has a higher percentage, more precisely 44.3%

Instruments

Two tools were used to conduct the research, which measured self-esteem and the level of acceptance of others.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SS) is possibly the most widely used scale for assessing the concept of self-esteem in the social sciences. The scale highlights Rosenberg's attempt to design a one-size-fits-all, global assessment of self-esteem. SS is one of the Guttman-type scales - the items are statements about the value perception of one's own person on a constant. 41 A chain of research has shown that this scale is a valid and accurate measure of the concept of self-esteem as a one-dimensional concept, while other research has shown the existence of a two-factor structure of SS. Goldsmith (1986) states that this factorial structure of SS depends on a multitude of sample-specific traits, such as the age or social status of the participants. For example, research involving adults found two independent facets (Kaplan & Pokorny 1969; Shahani et al., 1990), facets that usually had positively worded items and negatively worded items. - self-confidence and self-depreciation. Research in which students or students participated as either vehemently support the one-dimensional structure of the scale (Silbert & Tippett, 1965; Crandal, 1973; McCarthy & Hoge, 1982) or found factors of an interdependent nature or correlated patterns. similar (Rosenberg, 1979; Hagborg, 1993). The Rosenberg scale consists of 10 items that have 4 possible answers rated between total disagreement (1 point) and total agreement (4 points). Items 2,5,6,8,9 are reversed, ie they must be quoted in reverse (Rosenberg, 1965).

William Fey makes a scale of measuring and analyzing the affective dispositions and behaviors of an individual manifested towards other human beings, as is well known they have an influential and decisive character on interpersonal relationships in all their spheres - at the level of action (work, activities carried out in general), emotionally (it includes emotional relationships of any kind), at the level of interpersonal communication process. The behavior shown by a person towards his peers is a determining and decisive factor in terms of the quantity and especially the level of quality of interpersonal relationships that he aims to establish, but with the same intensity it is a repercussion following the reactions received from others (Vlasceanu et al., 2013). The concept of acceptance of others can be interpreted by alluding to synonyms that are much better described in the field of psychodiagnosis, such as tolerance and goodwill, respectively (Vlasceanu et al., 2013). The evaluation resulting from the application of this scale is made through descriptors such as: the concepts of openness and flexibility in antithesis with the concepts of rigidity and dogmatism; respectively trust as an antonym of the concept of suspicion and at the same time of the concept of criticism; elimination of regrets, misanthropic

predispositions and hostility manifested in relationships with others (Vlasceanu et al., 2013).

Procedure

The research tools, presented above, were introduced on the Google Forms platform, and the link to access the questionnaires was sent in online environments that belong exclusively to Psychology Students, from Hyperion University, Bucharest. We mention that the participating students have taken note of the provisions of the GDPR Law, regarding the agreement of confidentiality of data. Thus, after collecting the answers to the questionnaires, the data obtained were entered and coded in the SPSS statistical program.

4. RESULTS

For each of the 5 working hypotheses of the research, statistical tests were performed in order to validate or invalidate them.

Hypothesis 1: For this hypothesis the t test was applied for independent samples after which the following results were obtained: t = 2.7, df = 120, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.008. This hypothesis was validated.

Hypothesis 2: We assume that at least one of the groups of the three years of study in the undergraduate program in psychology has statistically significant differences in terms of self-esteem and acceptance of others. For this hypothesis, the ANOVA ONE-WAY Test was applied,

We note that both in the analysis of homogeneity of variances in the Levene test and in the analysis of variance provided by the ANOVA test, we did not obtain statistically significant probabilities, the probability of the Levene test being 0.62, in regarding the level of self-esteem, respectively 0.79 regarding the level of acceptance of others, from which we can deduce that the groups of the three years of study have similar scores in terms of self-esteem, respectively acceptance of others. The analysis of Variance, offered by the ANOVA test, confirms what we stated, a little above, regarding the level of self-esteem and the level of acceptance of others, at the three years of study, from the Bachelor of Psychology program, the probabilities obtained in this test not being statistically significant, in the case of Self-Esteem, obtaining a value of 0.51, and in the case of Acceptance of the others a value of 0.39. Both values exceed the statistical significance threshold of 0.05 and thus the hypothesis 2 is invalidated.

Hypothesis 3

For this hypothesis, the ANOVA ONE-WAY Test was applied, following which the results were obtained: We observe from the group homogeneity analysis performed by means of the Levene test, that at the level of the analyzed groups (Married, Unmarried, in a relationship and Alone), there are no statistically significant differences in terms of self-esteem (p = 0.80) respectively the level of

acceptance of the others (p = 0.55). In conclusion, the groups analyzed are homogeneous in these respects, mentioned above. However, following the Analysis of Variants (ANOVA), we notice that a statistically significant difference (p = 0.016) was identified in terms of acceptance of others, at the level of the analyzed groups (Married, Unmarried, In a relationship and Alone), so we continued with the Bonferroni Post-Hoc Analysis, in order to detect between which 50 analyzed groups this statistically significant difference is found in terms of the level of acceptance of the others. Following the Bonferroni Post-Hoc Analysis we notice that between the Married and the Single, there is a statistically significant difference in the acceptance of the others (p = 0.010), which shows that the third research hypothesis was partially validated.

Hypothesis 4

For this hypothesis, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used, due to the abnormal distribution of the respondents in terms of their gender, 82.79% of participants, 101 people being women, but only 16.39%, that is, 20 people being men, out of a total of 122 participants. Therefore, due to the statistically significant probability of 0.009, we conclude that statistically significant differences were identified in terms of self-esteem between men and women, especially higher levels of self-esteem among women, and thus our hypothesis. validated. Also, in terms of the level of acceptance of the others, statistically significant results were obtained, these being U = 690, Wilcoxon W = 900, Z = -2.23, Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) = 0.025, so we can conclude that women presented this time, too, higher levels of acceptance of others, compared to men, proving once again that the hypothesis was validated.

Hypothesis 5

For this hypothesis, we used the T test for independent samples, and from its results we can see that from the point of view of self-esteem, in the Homogeneity Test Levene, we obtained a p of 0 , 53, a p greater than 0.05, and thus the probability obtained in the T test for independent samples is that of the row Equal Variances assumed, in the amount of 0.001, a statistically significant high value, from which we deduce that this hypothesis has been validated from the point of view of self-esteem, the analyzed age categories (Under 30 and Over 31) presenting statistically significant. Also with regard to the level of acceptance of the others, we have a probability of the Levene test greater than 0.05, which is 0.93 and thus also in this case the probability obtained in the T test for independent samples is the one in the row Equal Variances assumed, in the amount of 0.003, a statistically significant high value, from which we deduce that this hypothesis was validated also from the point of view of the level of acceptance of the others, the analyzed age categories (Under 30 years and Over 31 years) again showing statistically significant differences.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As we saw in the introduction to this paper, as well as in the theoretical part, self-esteem is the main foundation of our identity and our inner balance, through which we manage to create that social identity, our social self, which we need to be able to adapt to the environment in which we live (Chraif, Rizeanu, 2021; Mikulovic, 2021; Stomff, 2014). We also saw how important social interactions and affiliation are both in the sense of identity, which we talked about a little above, and in fulfilling a defining relational need, that of belonging. We can further state that through this research we have been able to demonstrate that a high self-esteem gives us the feeling of security and protection of our own person. Thus, with a high self-esteem, we are more confident in our own strength, this confidence giving us the feeling that everything will be as we want and thus we are able to make stable and long-lasting interpersonal connections. Regarding the field of interpersonal relationships, we can confidently say that our research has reached an extremely important and interesting topic for both future psychologists and the general population and here we refer to the acceptance of others, because with this concept we have succeeded to demonstrate that in order to have quality interpersonal relationships we must show tolerance and goodwill towards the beliefs, values and needs of the person with whom we are in direct interaction.

We believe that it is very important for the general public to find out as much relevant information as possible about accepting others because scientific evidence is needed to encourage people who read it to adopt as many prosocial behaviors as possible that will support them. in adapting the being to a new reality. A first conclusion that we can draw, based on the literature studied in this paper is that both self-esteem and interpersonal relationships influence each other, being interdependent; both help us to have quality interpersonal relationships, but also interpersonal relationships help us to have an optimal self-esteem. We emphasize and point out that the objectives and hypotheses of this research were constructed starting from the literature, all converging towards a single meaning, that of following and demonstrating the effects of self-esteem on interpersonal relationships. Thus, the general objective of this research, which started from the premise that the way in which psychology students relate to those around them, the social interactions they have started from the way they perceive themselves, has been assumed since first working hypothesis and demonstrated using the t-test for independent samples. Due to the statistically significant results obtained in this first hypothesis ($p = 0.008$) we can conclude that this research showed that even at the level of psychology students a lower self-esteem leads to a low acceptance of others. In the second hypothesis I surprised and demonstrated with the help of ANOVA One-Way Variance Analysis an extremely important thing, namely that at the level of the three years of study for the Bachelor of Psychology there are no statistically

significant differences in self-esteem and acceptance. and by this scientific fact I have shown that it does not matter to future psychologists what year of study they are in as long as they have extensive experience and can have knowledge to help them be in harmony with both themselves and the person and personality of the other. Also, in this chapter we can point out that the confirmation of this hypothesis will help the readers of this research who may be future patients / clients of tested psychology students to be convinced that novice psychologists can show the same qualities as older psychologists in this profession. The conclusion we can draw due to the results obtained in the third hypothesis is that the marital status on the studied population has repercussions only on the acceptance of others, detecting statistically significant differences, in this regard only between married and single, thus being able to deduce that people need a deeper relational connection in order to learn to be tolerant and benevolent and to accept others as they are, so our research also demonstrates what other research has shown, namely that commitment is the important element. whereby an interpersonal relationship becomes stable and lasting. Also in this research, in the statistically significant results obtained in the fourth hypothesis, we demonstrated what in other research, performed on the general population was inversely proportional at least from the point of view of self-esteem. Thus, we have obtained higher levels in terms of self-esteem and acceptance of others in women, compared to men, so here that among psychology students, things are completely different unlike the general population.

Due to this hypothesis that has been fully validated we can say that this research has an authentic character and slightly different from other research that has shown that men have higher self-esteem as opposed to women. The fifth hypothesis of the research through the results obtained from the applied statistical tests showed that age is a predictor of the level of acceptance of others, the group of psychology students over 31 years obtaining higher averages both from the perspective of self-esteem and perspective the level of acceptance of others because the two concepts are related to all the experience gained over time by psychology students, in terms of the relationship with others and the relationship with oneself. If this research is continued, it will be an important step in the scientific world, as it represents another perspective from which self-esteem and interpersonal relationships are viewed. and a reflection on what it means to be a student of Psychology.

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