PERCEIVED DYSFUNCTIONALITY AND THE BEHAVIOR TOWARD ONESELF

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Abstract
The study focuses on maladaptive schemas in adults and their relation to identity structures and the study level. We started from the assumption that the schemas measured by YSQ-S3, according to the five domains described by Young (1990, 2003) conduct to a perceived social dysfunctionality and influences the Behavior Toward Oneself, being also influenced by the study level. The research was conducted on a sample of 60 adults, equally men and women, belonging to three major study level groups: eight grades graduates; high school graduates; university graduates. The results indicate differences between the three groups, according to the study level.

Keywords: maladaptive schema; perceived dysfunctionality; behavior towards oneself; study level

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of schema can be found in the cognitive approach of psychopathology from the beginning of the cognitive theories (Stopa and Waters, 2005). According to Beck’s cognitive theory of depression (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979), a schema is a fixed cognitive model that guides an individual toward a specific conceptualization of a specific set of stimuli. The negative beliefs about the self, the world, and the future incorporated in stable cognitive schemas are the key vulnerability factor for depression (Renner et al., 2012).

Later Young has developed a set of interventions for personality disorder, which uses schemas as the central organizing concept (Stopa and Waters, 2005).

According to Young (1990, 2003), early maladaptive schemas are broad, pervading themes or models composed of cognitions, memories, emotions and bodily sensations about oneself and the relationships with others. They tend to occur and develop in childhood or adolescence and provide adjustment of a person environment.

Later these schemas might become maladaptive in adulthood, being rigid and resistant to change patterns. Moreover, maladaptive schemas seem to be the ground for several DSM-IV Axis I and Axis II disorders (Soygüt, Karaozmoğlu, Cakir, 2009).

The main sources for maladaptive schemas are the early negative life experiences (from childhood) with the origin in one’s family. Young indicates that there are 18 maladaptive schemas, grouped in 5 domains (Young et al., 2003): disconnection/separation and rejection; impaired autonomy and performance; impaired limits; other-directness; overvigilance an inhibition.

The concept of Identity Structures (IS) was founded by Vasile (2011) and refers to the extensions of one’s self-concept in relation to the environment. According to the author, “the ‘self’ represents a core of the individual personality in an integrative view (taking into account a number of theories, starting with psychoanalysis and continuing with cognitive approaches, humanistic views etc.) and this core interact with the environment through several interfaces called Identity Structures (IS). In a sense, the IS represents the individual “self” in its dynamics resulting from the interaction with the environment” (Vasile, 2011). Following the research, seven IS were found: physical identity; social identity; cultural identity; family identity; professional identity; self-esteem; behavior towards oneself.
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Within the study we started from the assumption that there is a relation between one’s Perceived Dysfunctionality (PD – as the result of the maladaptive schemas dynamics within one’s cognitive system) and the Behavior Towards Oneself (BO) and we studied this relation according to the study level of the subjects.

Perceived Dysfunctionality (PD) – occurs from early experience and contains schemas which refer to one’s belief that he/she is a person who doesn’t function in an effective way in the society, having many negative traits. This belief could be understood as a core belief of the maladaptive schemas of the individual. According to Young theories the maladaptive schemas are divided on five domains (presented above) and 18 maladaptive schemas.

Behavior Towards Oneself (BO) is also the result of the dynamics of the Identity Structures and represents the way of action towards oneself strictly related to the self-esteem and the feeling of success (in this case the BO is a rewarding one) or failure (in this case the BO consist in a sanction) (Vasile, 2012).

The study sample consisted of 60 adult subjects, 30 men and 30 women, divided in three groups according to three study level categories: 20 subjects which have not graduated high school, but only 8 grades; 20 subjects which have graduated the high school; 20 subjects which have graduated the university.

2.1. Instruments

Within the study two instruments have been used:

- Young Questionnaire – Short Form (YSQ-S3) – a schema inventory which measures the 18 maladaptive schemas.
- Identity Structures Inventory (ISI) – an inventory which measures the 7 IS.

Both instruments have been used and their final scores have been adapted so the final scores be similar, from 1 to 5, 1 meaning that the observed characteristic/treat is at its minimum and 5 meaning the characteristic/treat is at its maximum.

3. RESULTS

Following the study, the data have been collected and processed and statistical information has been obtained. The average scores for PD and BO for the three groups are represented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study level</th>
<th>Perceived dysfunctionality</th>
<th>Behavior towards oneself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all the three groups the Pearson coefficient has been calculated and the results have been represented associated with linear functions in the figure 1, 2 and 3.
Fig. 1. Perceived dysfunctionality related to behavior towards oneself for subjects who have not graduated high school.

Pearson: 0.227518346

Fig. 2. Perceived dysfunctionality related to behavior towards oneself for subjects who have graduated high school.

Pearson: 0.148282456
4. DISCUSSION

Statistical data resulting from this study show a positive correlation between PD and BO within all the three groups (no high school, high school and university graduates). This result could suggest (for the studied sample) that the PD level is closely related to the BO. For instance, a person who has a feeling of success accompanied by positive and effective social functionality, adopt a positive behavior toward itself by buying something new or relaxing in a pleasant way. From the studied sample it seems there is no direct influence on the PD and BO from the education level.

5. REFERENCES