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HYPER-VIGILANCE CORRELATION WITH SOCIAL IDENTITY
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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 from Hyper-vigilance (overvigilance and inhibition) domain, according to the five domains described by Young (1990, 2003), influences the Social Identity and could be influenced also 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; hyper-vigilance; social identity; 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, Karaoğlan, 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 and rejection; impaired autonomy and performance; impaired limits; other-directness; overvigilance an inhibition (hyper-vigilance).

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 Hyper-vigilance (HV) and Social Identity (SI) and we studied this relation according to the study level of the subjects.

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Hyper-vigilance (HV) domain - contains schemas on negativity, hypercriticism and punishment and consists in subject disbelief in happiness. In this area are found four maladaptive schemas:

- Negativity/vulnerability to error - exaggerated expectation that things will go wrong at any moment, an inordinate fear of making mistakes that could lead in that direction.
- Overcontrol/emotional inhibition - the belief that one must inhibit emotions and impulses, especially anger, because any expression of feelings would harm others, or lead to loss of self-esteem, embarrassment, retaliation, or abandonment.
- Unrealistic standards/hypercriticism - belief that one must always strive harder, no matter the efforts.
- Punishment - the belief that one must be angry and harshly punishing with those people (including oneself) who do not meet one’s (high) expectations or standards. Usually these parents blamed, punished, or were verbally abusive when mistakes were made.

Social identity (SI) understood as the extent to which people identify with a particular social group that determines their inclination to behave in terms of their group membership (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 HV and SI for the three groups are represented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study level</th>
<th>Impaired Limits</th>
<th>Social Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.25</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. Hypervigilance related to Social Identity for subjects who have not graduated high school. Pearson: 0.4821795

Fig. 2. Hypervigilance related to Social Identity for subjects who have graduated high school. Pearson: 0.6140507
4. DISCUSSION

Statistical data resulting from this study show a strong positive correlation between HV and SI both for the “no high school” and “high-school” groups. Moreover, the correlation between HV and SI is stronger in the secondary school graduates group. For the last group (university graduates) there is a negative correlation between HV and SI.

This result could indicate (for the studied sample) that the education level plays an important role in the cognitive restructuring processes. Of course, other factors which influence the maladaptive schemas could be discussed here, such as the family background of the subjects or the individual life experiences. Yet it could be suggested that the education plays a major role in the dynamics of the cognitive processes and individual schemas.

5. REFERENCES