Self-Esteem and Motivation for Affiliations with Students from the Humanities

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Abstract

The paper interprets and explores two main constructs: "self-esteem" and "motivation for affiliation". They are placed in the field of psychology of youth, the subjects are students of humanities. The study was conducted at Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. The aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between self-esteem and motivation for affiliation, as they are compared in students majoring in psychology with students majoring in pedagogy and speech therapy. Self-esteem is the core of personality, experiences and behavior. It is important for interactions in young people. The need to belong to the group (affiliation) is a prerequisite for self-knowledge and satisfies a number of basic needs. Using a standardized self-assessment test and Albert Mehrabian's affiliation test, we track how the level of self-assessment determines affiliation needs. These: 1. Students with average and above average level of self-esteem have a higher motivation for affiliation, compared to students with low and very high level of self-esteem. 2. We assume that there will be statistically significant differences in the manifestations of the two constructs in students from the specialty of Psychology and other students from the humanities. We expect that psychology students will have average and above average levels of self-esteem, which will affect their motivation for affiliation, compared to students from the other group. The results of the research provide information about the personal development of students in the humanities, which could be used by university professors in order to optimize the learning process and create conditions for full inclusion of students in university life.

Keywords: self-assessment, need for affiliation, communication, humanities students.

1. Self-esteem

The self-esteem is an integral part of the self-concept, which expresses a person's ideas and beliefs about himself, about what he is, what qualities he or she possesses.

The self-esteem is the way a person feels about themselves, including the extent to which they have self-esteem and self-acceptance. Self-esteem is a sense of personal value and competence that people associate with their self-concept (*Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 2008: 1086). The construct is related to the perception and evaluation of our physical body, to the competencies and abilities, mental qualities. Through the prism of evolutionary biological theory, T. Joel Wade (2000) found that patterns of physical and sexual attractiveness differ between the sexes.

The self-esteem is a phenomenological construct, expressed in the ability of the individual to assess their cost, value, significance, importance, uniqueness as a subject, which leads to existential experiences for themselves. Accepting oneself as a valuable object deserving of love and respect is the essence of sound self-esteem.

According to Ruseva and Baturov (2016), low self-esteem is associated with feelings of loneliness.

The development of self-esteem is a long and complex process, determined by a number of factors and conditions, incl. the formation of the personality in the family, the influences of the wide social environment, genetic influences. In this regard, psychology traditionally discusses the process of socialization, parenting styles, the creation of stable attachments and more. All of them are related to the development of the personality as a whole, as well as to the formation of self-esteem. At a certain stage of the ontogenetic development, the personality becomes capable of self-development, consciously and purposefully, incl. to develop his self-esteem.

The studies in children between 3 and 7 class show that there is a link between hopelessness, self-esteem and symptoms of depression. The research is based on hopelessness theory (Abela & Payne, 2003).

In general, self-esteem is built differently depending on what is the dominant parenting style in the family. Parenting styles lead to the formation of different competencies and adaptive patterns in adolescents, and affect self-esteem. Self-esteem, in turn, correlates with adolescent aggression (Perez-Gramaje, Garcia, Reyes, Serra & Garcia, 2019).

The reflexive ability is especially important for the development of self-esteem. Reflection is a kind of research process aimed at exploring oneself, intellectual and personal qualities, motivation and more.

Distinguished implicit and explicit self-esteem. Self-esteem is an implicit belief, an intimate and personal opinion, and has an evaluative and cognitive aspect.

It is known that self-esteem can be measured and defined as high or low, relevant or not. High and low levels of self-esteem could range from complete self-underestimation and alienation to narcissistic narcissism. Therefore, the qualities and characteristics of self-esteem are predictors of personal maturity.

The self-esteem is directly related to interactions, our performance in society, aspirations to ourselves and others. In addition, the construct in question is relevant to the selection and application of adaptive or maladaptive behavioral patterns. It is also related to self-affirming behavior (assertiveness) and to what extent a person can manage (control) the social field.

Alicia D. Cast and Peter J. Burke (2002) suggest that self-esteem is an outcome of, and necessary ingredient in, the self-verification process that occurs within groups, maintaining both the individual and the group. Verification of role identities increases an individual's worth-based and efficacy-based self-esteem. The self-esteem built up by self-verification buffers the negative emotions that occur when self-verification is problematic, thus allowing continued interaction and continuity in structural arrangements during periods of disruption and change (Cast & Burke, 2002: 1041).

As self-esteem orients us in our value as subjects, it has to do with building and achieving identity and the need for achievement.

Consistent with attitude theory, self-esteem was considered to be an attitude toward self, with component self-beliefs that associate or dissociate self with a desired or undesired

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attribute. the structure of self-beliefs underlying self-esteem is different across ethnic and gender boundaries (Tashakkori, 1993: 479).

There are a number of studies looking for a link between self-esteem and physical activity as predictors of physical health perceptions. Such correlations also exist in the elderly. Pablo Jodra, José Luis Maté-Muñoz and Raúl Domínguez (2019) found a positive relationship between physical activity and self-esteem in people aged 63-75.

As noted above, our goal is to examine the level of self-esteem in students. The age of the subjects is traditionally defined as the transition from adolescence to youth, early adolescence, early adulthood. The students are faced with the issue of starting a job and professional realization. Interestingly, the relationship between self-esteem is the fear of success. Luella C. Leon and Lynda R. Matthews (210) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and poor job interview performance. They found that there was a correlation between the level of self-esteem and self-failure on success.

The interrelationships between unemployment, self-esteem, and depression in young people are complex (Sheeran, Abrams & Orbell, 1995).

The self-esteem is related to our sense of self-efficacy and our ability to learn. Alison Maxwell and Tatiana Bachkirova (2010) examine in detail the influence of self-esteem in the coaching process in coaching practice.

We can summarize that self-esteem is the core of the personality, in particular of the self-image; maintains existential stability and self-pride, which allows the individual to express himself, to have pretensions and aspirations to others; to self-authorize. Self-esteem is also a basic need, the satisfaction of which leads to the experience of well-being. Viewed through the paradigm of positive psychology, self-esteem and self-awareness are associated with a positive, meaningful and productive life. It is a predictor of adaptation and interaction with others.

2. Motivation for affiliation

The need to belong to social groups has deep evolutionary roots. For millions of years of evolution, our ancestors have interacted and established more and more lasting and deep contacts with others, which has satisfied their basic needs.

People share an innate urge to form relationships, this urge is primary. People have an innate urge to form social relationships and develop relationships with others of mutual care, which is actually satisfied only when the attachment is mutual (Lawrence, P., Noria, N., 2002: 86).

As we have already noted, the need for affiliation is inherent in communication between people. P. Vaclavik, D. Bavelas and D. Jackson (2005) formulate a metacommunicative axiom of the pragmatics of communication, expressed in the impossibility of not communicating and not communicating. The behavior itself sends messages. No matter how hard one tries not to communicate, it is impossible. Even silence has the value of a message that affects others, and they in turn also respond to these communications and therefore communicate (Vaclavik et al., 2005: 46-47).

N. Virmozelova (2012) notes that the term affiliation is considered mainly in the context of two types of factors – environmental and motivational. Affiliation can be defined as a process of connecting and connecting with a group, as well as a characteristic of the personality describing the degree of inclusion in the group (Virmozelova, 2012: 5).

The motivation for affiliation is formed in the process of socialization. Parental styles, the support that children receive, the formation of basic attachment at an early age are important.

Peer relationships are another aspect of affiliation. L. Andreeva (1998), based on theoretical research, notes that the two main types of peer relationships are friendship and partnership.

At the heart of the motivation for affiliation is the building of a stable attachment between parents and children, which is a prerequisite for the mental health of children. Attachment plays an essential role in personal development. Dealing with stress, identity, cheerfulness, etc. depends on the peculiarities of the built attachment (Bowlby, 209).

E. Maslow (2001) in his hierarchy of needs puts the need for belonging and love above the physiological and above the need for security. When the need to give and receive love and affection is not satisfied, one feels acutely the need for friends, spouse or children. According to him, the thwarting of this need is at the heart of poor adaptation and severe pathology (Maslow, 2001: 87-88).

The need for affiliation is a basic need, the satisfaction of which leads to experiencing a meaningful, fulfilling and productive lifestyle. Belonging to a group, social community, professional or friendly circle is a prerequisite for mental well-being.

Human relationships are important because they benefit. If we have established appropriate social contacts, we will probably live longer, have better physical and mental health and feel happier. Health and happiness are more strongly influenced by a person's social relationships than by his income, social status and education (Argyle & Henderson, 1989: 40).

In social psychology, affiliation is placed in the context of social identity and intergroup behavior. Social identity is that part of the individual self-concept that arises as a result of knowing that you are a member of a social group (or groups), as well as the emotional significance associated with that membership (Tajfel, 145; by: Todorova, - compiler, 1990).

The motivation for affiliation places the individual in the context of the social field and interactions with others. These interactions could be competitive or conformist. The person in the group has a different sociometric status. In the group, the individual may accept or reject group norms and influences, show varying degrees of conformity. The affiliation of the group can satisfy different needs – from lower – to higher.

The interaction is more than just mutual help and mutual stimulation. It is the establishment of patterns of behavior, norms, roles, organizational structures. The interaction component in communication refers to the organization of the interaction (Dzhonev, 1996: 53-54).

Various processes take place in the social group, incl. comparison with others, competition. In this regard, the need for affiliation is determined by personal characteristics, but at the same time the individual is confronted with group norms, pressures and values.

If a person is motivated and strives for belonging, in addition to being able to assert himself and demonstrate competitiveness, he can receive from others, generally speaking, mental resources.

It is important to note that in the presence of motivation for affiliation, the individual develops his social and emotional competencies such as concern for others, cooperation and cooperation in the implementation of common activities.

People with low motivation for affiliation express a need for distance from the group, are probably more anxious and with less social skills, may show shyness and awkwardness in communication.

How developed are students and young people, and are they able to meet their need for affiliation? Today's students are the generation that "lives" and resides in cyberspace. We believe that the virtual world also provides an opportunity to be present in groups, forums, etc.,

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but at the same time students will need affiliation in the real life field and this will be dictated by the tasks facing them, namely : professional realization, connection with partners, etc.

3. Methodology

The following data collection tools were used in the present study:

• Questionnaire "Motivation for affiliation" (A. Mehrabian) – adaptation by Natasha Virmozelova (2012)

The questionnaire contains 48 items and the following 8 scales (Table 1).

Table 1. Internal consistency of the affiliation motivation questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha by Virmozelova (2012: 70)	Cronbach's alpha calculated in the current sample	Number of items
Need to join the group	.784	.870	8
Need to withdraw from the group	.721	.598	11
Avoid confrontation	.770	.850	6
Shyness, depending on the approval of the group	.730	.847	5
Spontaneity in contact	.653	.809	6
Freedom, independence from the approval of the group	.602	.697	3
Directness in confrontation	.623	.714	3
Distance in contact	.604	.718	6

The conducted analysis of the internal consistency shows that the questionnaire is reliable, except for the subscale "Need to withdraw from the group", which will be excluded from the analyzes related to the confirmation of the hypotheses.

• M. Rosenberg Global Self-Assessment Scale

The Global Self-Assessment Study Scale contains 10 items, adapted from Peneva & Stoyanova (2011). The examined person self-assessed with a 4-point liqueur scale: 1 – "completely disagree", 2 – "disagree", 3 – "agree", 4 – "completely agree". The scale contains two subscales. Items in the "self-underestimation" scale are reversed.

Table 2. Internal consistency of the affiliation motivation questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha by Peneva & Stoyanova (2011)	Cronbach's alpha calculated in the current sample	Number of items
Self-underestimation	.731	.710	5
Self-esteem	.768	.882	5
Global self-esteem	-	.760	10

The analysis of the internal consistency shows that the scale is reliable.

The data collected with the two tools were processed in SPSS 19, using the following analyzes / methods: descriptive statistics; reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha); correlation analysis; t-test.

4. Respondents

The present study included 205 individuals (students), of whom 199 women and 6 men aged between 18 and 59 years (M=28.63; SD=10.110).

5. Results

The following are descriptive statistics of the raw / total score of the subjects (N=205) on the scales.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of raw / total score

	M	Me	Mo	SD
Need to join the group	36.36	36	29	11.101
(Need to withdraw from the group)	44.48	45	54	9.708
Avoid confrontation	21.71	21	16	8.806
Shyness, depending on the approval of the group	15.23	14	5	7.299
Spontaneity in contact	24.73	24	19	8.659
Freedom. independence from the group's approval	13.15	14	13	4.785
Directness in confrontation	12.68	13	13	4.748
Distance in contact	23.25	24	26	7.733
Global self-esteem	25.83	26	27	4.294
Self-esteem	15.73	16	15	3.460
Self-underestimation	14.90	15	17	2.995

From the results presented in Table 3 it can be seen that the arithmetic mean values on the scales of the questionnaire for motivation for affiliation are close to those derived by Virmozelova (2012: 71), entering the norm.

From the results presented in Table 3 shows that the arithmetic mean values for "Global Self-Assessment", "Self-esteem" and "Self-underestimation" are close to those derived by Peneva and Stoyanova (2011), entering the norm.

The following are the results of a correlation analysis aimed at verifying whether a significant correlation is found between motivation for affiliation and global self-esteem in Bulgarian students (N=205).

Table 4. Analysis of the relationship between affiliation motivation and global self-esteem

		Global self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-underestimation
Need to join the group	r	.079	**.307****	**.241****
	p	.258	**.000**	**.001**
Avoid confrontation	r	**.234****	.078	**-.245****
	p	**.001**	.266	**.000**
Shyness, depending on the approval of the group	r	**.248****	-.103	**-.475****
	p	**.000**	.141	**.000**
Spontaneity in contact	r	.078	**.189****	.107
	p	.267	**.007**	.126
Freedom, independence from the approval of the group	r	**.250****	**.226****	-.096
	p	**.000**	**.001**	.169
Directness in confrontation	r	**.178***	**.246****	.029
	p	**.011**	**.000**	.678
Distance in contact	r	**.217****	.116	**-.178***
	p	**.002**	.099	**.011**

* The correlation is significant at the .05 level

** The correlation is significant at level .01

The results of the analysis presented in Table. 4 show that there is a statistically significant positive weak correlation between global self-esteem and: avoidance of confrontation ($r_{(203)}$=.234; p=.001); shyness, depending on the approval of the group ($r_{(203)}$=.248; p<.001); freedom, independence from group approval ($r_{(203)}$=.25; p<.001); directness in confrontation ($r_{(203)}$=.178; p=.011) and distance in contact ($r_{(203)}$=.217; p=.002).

There is also a statistically significant positive moderate correlation between self-esteem and the need to be included in the group ($r_{(203)}$=.307; p<.001) in the studied students. The results of the analysis presented in Table. 4 show that a statistically significant positive weak correlation is found between self-esteem and: spontaneity in contact ($r_{(203)}$=.189; p=.007); freedom, independence from the approval of the group ($r_{(203)}$=.226; p=.001) and directness in confrontation ($r_{(203)}$=.246; p<.001).

The correlation between self-underestimation and the need to be included in the group is statistically significant and weak ($r_{(203)}$=.241; p=.001). And a statistically significant negative weak correlation between self-underestimation and: avoidance of confrontation ($r_{(203)}$=-.245; p< .001) and distance in contact ($r_{(203)}$ =-.178; p=.011).

There was also a statistically significant negative moderate correlation between self-underestimation and timidity, depending on the approval of the group ($r_{(203)}$=-.475; p<.001) in the studied students.

The obtained results give grounds to partially confirm the assumption in the first hypothesis that students will have a significant positive relationship between their self-esteem and their motivation for affiliation.

Following are the results of a t-test to establish significant differences in Bulgarian students majoring in Psychology (N=53) compared to other students majoring in the humanities (N=66) in terms of their motivation for affiliation and global self-esteem.

Table 5. Differences in the motivation for affiliation and in the global self-esteem of Bulgarian students according to their specialty

	Specialty	N	M	SD	t	p
Need to join the group	Psychology	53	34.53	10.482	-0.827	.410
	Other humanitarian	66	36.24	11.802		
Avoid confrontation	Psychology	53	20.60	7.870	-0.761	.448
	Other humanitarian	66	21.76	8.491		
Shyness, depending on the approval of the group	Psychology	53	13.42	6.191	-1.956	.053
	Other humanitarian	66	15.97	7.722		
Spontaneity in contact	**Psychology**	53	**22.11**	**7.846**	**-1.994**	**.048**
	Other humanitarian	66	**25.49**	**10.098**		
Freedom, independence from the approval of the group	Psychology	53	12.68	4.255	-0.514	.608
	Other humanitarian	66	13.12	4.969		
Directness in confrontation	Psychology	53	11.66	4.146	-1.188	.237
	Other humanitarian	66	12.68	5.036		
Directness in confrontation	**Psychology**	53	**20.74**	**6.723**	**-2.567**	**.012**
	Other humanitarian	66	**24.21**	**7.804**		
Global self-esteem	Psychology	53	25.66	3.828	0.331	.742
	Other humanitarian	66	25.40	4.758		
Self-esteem	Psychology	53	16.11	3.262	1.436	.154
	Other humanitarian	66	15.18	3.708		
Self-underestimation	Psychology	53	15.45	3.166	1.223	.224
	Other humanitarian	66	14.79	2.760		

From the results presented in Table 5 shows that there are statistically significant differences in Bulgarian students majoring in Psychology compared to other students majoring in humanities in terms of the following components of their motivation for affiliation: Spontaneity in contact ($t_{(117)}$=-1.994; p=.048) and Contact distance ($t_{(117)}$=-2.567; p=.012). Regarding their global self-esteem, no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups of individuals (p>.5).

Students in Psychology have lower levels of spontaneity in contact and distance in contact compared to those in other humanities. But both groups are within normal levels of spontaneity and distance, despite the differences.

No significant differences in self-esteem were found between the two groups of students (p>.05).

6. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to reveal the relationship between self-esteem and motivation for affiliation in students majoring in psychology and other humanities (pedagogy, etc.).

Two hypotheses have been raised.

The assumption in the First Hypothesis that students will have a significant positive relationship between their self-esteem and their motivation for affiliation was partially confirmed. It was shown that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with higher levels of need for inclusion in the group of students studied. As well as the more pronounced tendency to self-underestimation is associated with higher levels of shyness and dependence on the approval of the group in the studied students.

Other links have been found between self-esteem and student motivation for affiliation, but they are weak.

The assumption in the second hypothesis that there will be significant differences in the manifestations of the two constructs in psychology students and other humanities students was also partially confirmed, as significant differences were found only in spontaneity and distance in contact as components of motivation. for affiliation between the two groups of persons. Students in Psychology had lower levels of spontaneity and distance in contact compared to those in other humanities. But both groups are within normal levels of spontaneity and distance, despite the differences.

No significant differences in self-esteem were found between the two groups of students, and the expectation (in the second hypothesis) that psychology students will have above average self-esteem compared to students in the other group, who will have a normal level, was not confirmed.

Acknowledgements

The authors declare no competing interests.

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