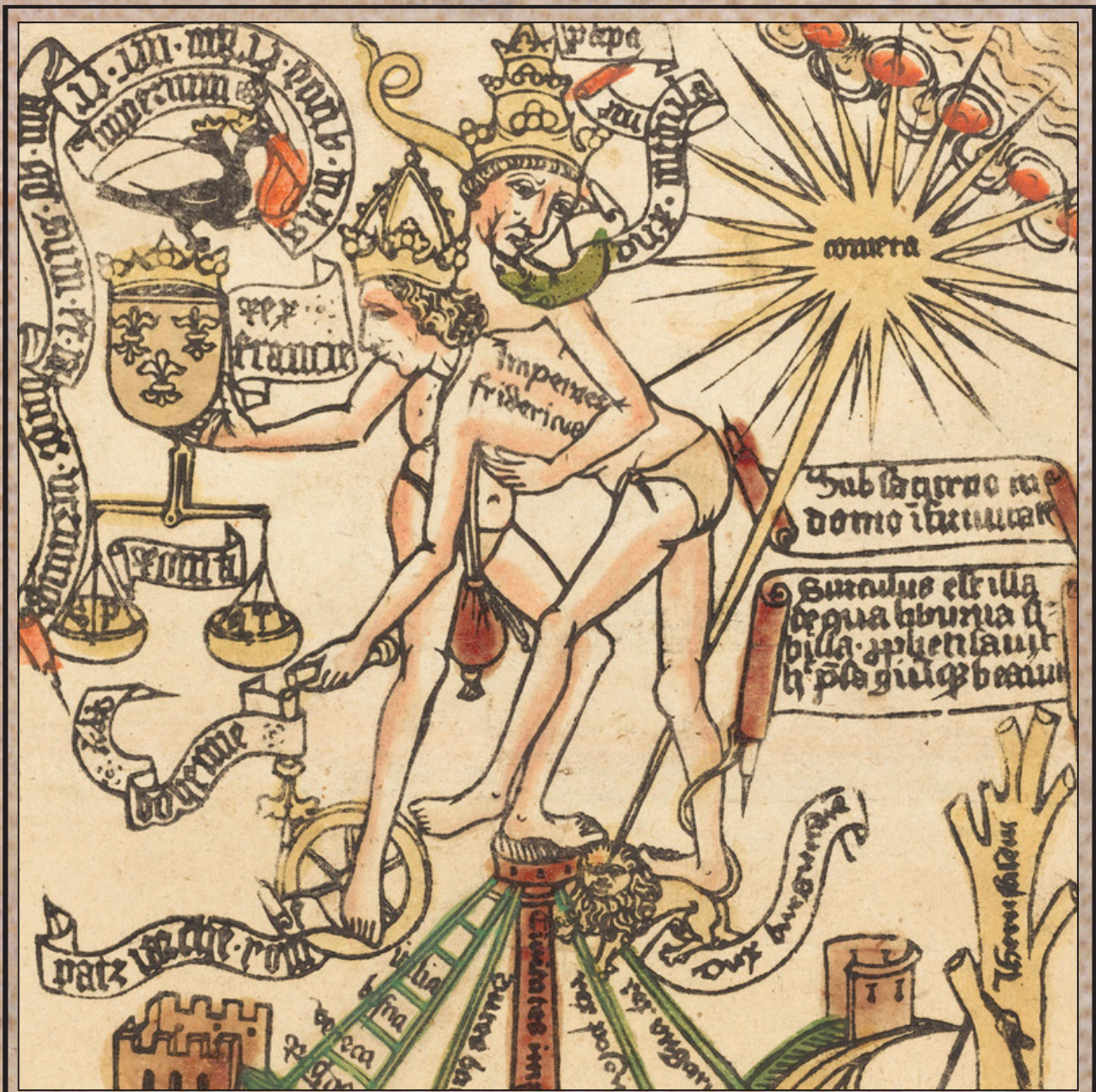


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ASSERTIVENESS SCALE AS A TEAMWORK APTITUDE PREDICTOR

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness has been gaining attention in the research studies in vocational and higher education and in managerial processes. The aim of this study was to examine a relationship between the level of assertiveness and willingness to work in a team, and research to what extent the level of assertiveness can predict the attitudes towards teamwork. The Scale of Assertiveness and a Scale of Attitudes towards Teamwork were applied to the sample of 284 respondents. The results suggest that individuals with higher scores on the Scale of Assertiveness have more positive attitudes towards teamwork, and what is significant is that the research confirmed that individual behaviour in a team structured environment can be improved through personal assertiveness development.

Keywords: higher education, assertiveness, communication, teamwork, assertiveness scale, business

LA SCALA DI ASSERTIVITÀ COME INDICATORE PREDITTIVO DELLA PRONTEZZA A LAVORARE IN UN TEAM

Il concetto di assertività attira l'attenzione delle ricerche professionali, accademiche e manageriali. Lo scopo del saggio riguarda il rapporto fra il livello di assertività e la prontezza a lavorare in team nonché la misura nella quale il livello di assertività possa prevedere gli atteggiamenti nei confronti del lavoro in un team. La scala di assertività e le Scale di atteggiamenti sono state usate su un campione di 284 persone intervistate. I risultati hanno mostrato che le persone con i risultati più alti nella scala d'assertività hanno gli atteggiamenti più positivi verso il lavoro in un team. Inoltre, è ancora più importante, le ricerche hanno confermato che il comportamento individuale nell'ambiente strutturato come un team venga migliorato attraverso il personale sviluppo dell'assertività.

Parole chiave: istruzione universitaria, assertività, comunicazione, lavoro in un team, scala di assertività, affari

INTRODUCTION

As a social and communication skill, assertiveness is important for interpersonal relations and represents one of the key elements of successful team functioning. In the 1970s and 1980s, assertiveness was quite popular in the clinical behaviour therapy investigation, but recently it has been neglected (Speed et al., 2017; Rimm & Masters, 1979; Goldfried & Davison, 1976). The field of professional engagement aiming at a clear goal or task has been widening and it assumes cooperation with others for a limited time. To reach these goals and tasks, it is necessary to ensure an adequate two-way communication that contributes to individual satisfaction, overall work atmosphere, and team goal achievement. The concept of assertiveness includes the idea of the broadly understood interpersonal skills, which is closely related to the general attitudes both towards other people and teamwork as a form of interpersonal activity of an individual. The idea that it is a multidimensional concept influenced even by cultural norms and values (Galassi & Galassi, 1978; Terlutter, Diehl & Mueller, 2010) can be understood as a possible change of the aptitude expression. In recent years, assertive communication skills have been endorsed in many countries, as well as the number of studies demonstrating that assertiveness is positively correlated with certain personality traits so that it represents a predictor of self-esteem and social anxiety emerged (Alinčić, 2013; Ames et al., 2017; Hershenberg & Goldfried, 2015; Speed et al., 2017; González Frago et al., 2018). Communication problems, together with the lack of confidence and recovery from mental illness can be improved with assertiveness skills and contribute to the fact that assertiveness is presently recognised as the competence that needs future professionals capacitated during their primary education. The assumptions of this study are that assertiveness is essential for team communication and that communication skills contribute to a positive attitude towards teamwork. At the beginning of the study the following research question was formed: How the result on the Scale of Assertiveness could predict the attitude towards teamwork? Thus, the main goal of the study was to determine if the Scale of Assertiveness could predict the attitude towards teamwork.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is often defined as a skill which indicates an individual willingness to express confidence, self-esteem and authority, to express his/her own attitude while respecting the same on the other side. Self-esteem, to the extent of respecting others, seems to enable constructive communication. Various authors define assertiveness in different ways. Sometimes, it is

defined as a behaviour, a skill, an attitude, and sometimes as a personality trait (Azais & Granger, 1995; Azais et al., 1999; Den Hartog, 2004). Some studies (Pfafman & McEwan, 2014) suggest that assertiveness is shaped by culture and context. Alberti and Emmons (1970) argue that assertive behaviour is any action that reflects an individual's best interest, *"including standing up for oneself without significant anxiety, expressing one's feelings comfortably, or exercising one's own rights without denying the rights of others"* (Speed et al., 2017, 1–2). Irrespective of the approach – biologically given, acquired by socialisation, embedded in our personality, or chosen to be used in different communication contexts, assertiveness is not static but can be learned, developed and successfully applied. The tools developed to measure assertiveness show that it can be assessed along a continuum. Hence, the degree of expression of this type of communication is most important. Therefore, these scales are successfully effective in evaluating the effects of different psychological treatments, anticipating individual behaviour in social situations and assessing personality; the study authors used them as an instrument to identify the relationship between assertiveness and attitudes towards teamwork. In this study, assertiveness is treated as a skill, an ability and a reflection of humanistic value orientation expressed in an individual communication capacity to stand up for his/her rights and values while respecting the same in others. Therefore, assertiveness can be seen as an essential social skill for effective interpersonal functioning (Tovilović, 2005), while assertive communication is a necessary element in a constructive teamwork communication.

Teamwork

In modern education (and business milieu), it has been increasingly insisted on teamwork, with no veritable difference between a group and a team in the workplace; in accordance with the prevailing trends, each working group is defined as a teamwork. Differences between a team and a group are significant, and authors explain them in detail. Unlike teams, a working group is successful based on the total of individual contributions, without any aspirations of joint work. Choosing a teamwork rather than a working group, people accept a risk of conflict, a joint working result and shared existential purpose, objectives, approaches and responsibility (Ciampa, 2005). Within a group, there is no significant increase in performance demands or situations that would initiate the team formation. The communication between working group members is reflected in sharing information, experiences and predictions, as well as making decisions that increase individual success in one's own field, but with no real common existential purpose, increasing performance demands or results that require teamwork and joint responsibility (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

However, a team is a group of people with complementary skills, gathered around a common purpose or set of work objectives, who are all equally accountable (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Derived from the studies of the group work model of the 60s (Ristić, 1999), a teamwork model was introduced in the beginning of the 80s as a new approach to business and organization development, efficiently applicable in large multinational corporations, scientific research centres, non-governmental organisations and educational institutions. The establishment of various teams and teamwork was recognised as a new trend in successful organisation and execution of business tasks. It is essential that each team member has the right and duty to express his/her own opinions and attitudes, which must be respected and incorporated into a discussion related to the strategy adopted, in order to realise a common goal. Teams represent a prerequisite for an individual responsibility because they can produce a multitude of ideas and experiences (Blanchard, 2000) necessary for solving complex problems in the contemporary competitive versatile environment.

Some teams are less successful than others, and there is a prejudice that teams including best experts are always successful. Belbin (2001) identifies a phenomenon called Apollo syndrome and evinces some unexpectedly poor results in teams made up of highly capable intellectuals and professionals. As the author states, the failure seems to be due to certain flaws in the way the team operates, such as time spent on destructive and wasteful debates, difficulties in decision-making, tendency to act entirely in line with the personal ambitions, and avoided confrontation, which slows down the decision making process and introduces confusion into the teamwork.

Teams in various fields associate their efficiency with a number of different factors. However, the willingness to cooperate within the team is the undeniable key to an effective team. Adizes (1994) accordingly believes that the complementary team is the one with the sense of unity and diversity, where diversity is reflected in complementary styles and ways of management, while the divergences are constructive only if their unity compensate mutual weaknesses. A number of authors (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Druskat & Wolff, 2001; Baker, Day & Salas, 2006) agree that the key characteristics of successful teams are the following:

- Successful conflict resolution – procedures and activities that lead to settlement, increase group cohesion and enhance decision-making process
- Open communication – a clear and precise articulation and expression of ideas, argumentation, active listening and constructive feedback.
- Interdependence – each individual is responsible for the quality and quantity of his/her own work, which contributes to the successful common performance.
- Clearly defined objectives – they must be known and clear to all team members, approved by all of them, as well as sufficiently attractive and worthy of their efforts.

- Common purpose – team members must know and understand the meaning of team's existence and determine tasks to be implemented; it is an ultimate goal of every team.
- Clearly defined roles – each team member must know what is expected from him in the team; each team member is expected to understand and respect individual roles and tasks.
- Mutual trust and respect, as well as free expression of opinions, improve a psychological sense of security within the team.

Attitudes towards teamwork

Attitudes generally reflect our inclinations towards a particular type of behaviour and help us understand and predict individual reactions in a social situation. Despite being changeable, education, information, modelling and target attractiveness may affect the adoption of different attitudes and behaviour alteration.

An attitude towards teamwork can be defined as a behavioural tendency that reflects an individual's relationship to his/her own willingness to work in a team. In this study, attitude towards teamwork is considered as an individual evaluation level of the teamwork key features (especially those that indicate his/her knowledge about the distinctive teamwork characteristics compared to a group or individual work) and individual feelings in relation to the roles and relationships prevailing in teams. Since individual attitudes can have various directions, it is important to understand the aspect of attitudes towards teamwork influenced by assertiveness and its contribution to the team performance. In their studies Ames and Flynn (2007) and Ames et al. (2017, 2) view assertiveness as "*a dimension in lay or folk judgements of behaviour in situations where people have instrumental goals that are not perfectly aligned with bothers on whom they are potentially interdependent*".

Individual willingness to begin or continue the teamwork depends not only on the knowledge about teamwork but also on prior teamwork experience and results (Gardner & Korth, 1998). As demonstrated in some studies, attitudes of students and staff towards teamwork also depend on prior knowledge, teamwork experience and overall team performance. If the teamwork experience was frustrating, people are more prone to individual work (Porter, 1993; Buckmaster, 1994; Scaraffiotti & Klein, 1994; Gardner & Korth, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The study sample comprised students being prepared for occupations in which teamwork was expected to be not only important but necessary for their future professional engagement. Those occupations primarily included professions related to education, work with children

Table 1: Number/percentage of students according to their professional profile.

	Number	Percentage
Educator (preschool teacher)	129	45.4
Physical education, tourism and sports	46	16.2
Psychologist	21	7.4
Teacher	26	9.2
Mechatronics and Robotics	62	21.8
Total	284	100.0

and interpersonal relations management in companies. In particular, the respondents were future educators (preschool teachers), teachers, psychologists, coaches and managers. These professional profiles were selected specifically according to their forthcoming professional requirements, as well as their teamwork aptitude and sensitivity. Moreover, according to the authors' findings, such respondents were most often interested in training programmes in the field of assertiveness.

In accordance with the theoretical understanding of the importance of assertiveness for team communication and the assumption that developed communication skills contribute to a positive attitude towards teamwork, several key objectives were set forth in the study. The main objective was to determine if the result gained on the Scale of Assertiveness could predict the attitude towards teamwork. The psychometric properties of both applied research instruments will be also presented in the study.

The size of the sample and the research procedure

The study sample consisted of 284 respondents, the final year students from different faculties from the University of Novi Sad. Those students were chosen since their future professional work would be significantly directed to teamwork and such organizational structure. The study involved the students who are educated for the professions of preschool teachers, physical education teachers, tourism, psychologists, teachers and the students from the department Mechatronics and Robotics. Table 1 presents the sample according to the number/percentage of students from each professional profile.

Gender structure was not uniform but it approximately reflected the female-male ratio in the total number of students in the selected study programmes. The sample consisted of 71.2% of females and 28.8% of males. The age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 53, while the average age of the sample was 22, which corresponded to the commonly expected age to

complete basic academic and professional studies, after which the trained personnel could be included in the work process. The final year students were targeted for the sample and most of them, namely 92.4%, had some experience in teamwork. In most cases, the respondents who had previously experienced team membership liked teamwork and were able to adapt to it (93%).

The survey was conducted in February 2015. The respondents were asked to fill the anonymous battery of instruments at their home faculties, in the presence of examiners. The average time required for completing the two instruments was approximately 20 minutes.

Instruments

The Scale of Assertiveness is a standardised measuring instrument for assessing the assertiveness construct of our population. It was created and standardised by Tovilović, Okanović and Krstić (2009) and it consists of 27 items in a five-level Likert-scale, which describe the reactions and behaviour typical for (lack of) assertiveness. The respondents were instructed to respond in accordance with their potential reactions in social situations that require assertive behaviours, ranging from a permanent absence of such reactions or behaviours to their constant presence. Applying this scale, it is possible to determine the individual assertiveness of each subject. The contemporary norms in our region were established on a sample of 727 respondents (Tovilović et al., 2009). Measured by Cronbach's Alpha, its reliability was 0.834.

The Scale of Attitudes towards Teamwork was designed specifically for this study and it consisted of 12 items that represent attitudes towards key features of teamwork. Each item represented a single attitude and a respondent could express agreement with this statement on a five-level Likert scale. Measured by Cronbach's Alpha, its reliability was 0.685. The detailed data on the scale will be shown in the study results.

RESULTS

Verification of the metric characteristics and the factor structure of the applied instruments

Factor analysis of the Scale of Assertiveness

The factor structure testing of the Scale of Assertiveness was performed using exploratory factor analysis of principal components. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin ratio was .91, while Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($p=.000$). Based on the results of Cattell's scree diagram, a single factor was isolated and the single factor structure of the questionnaire was confirmed, obtained by the authors of the scale and other authors (Genc, 2008; Subić, 2009). The factor described 29.14% of the total variance. All but one of the scale items (entry 18) saturated this factor with the statistical significance. The most descriptive

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the respondents' scores on the Scale of Assertiveness.

	Minimum	Maximum	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Assertiveness	44.00	125.00	94.49	14.12	-.32	.15

Table 3: The matrix structure of the first isolated factor.

	Saturation
Good mutual communication is not important for teamwork	.66
Teamwork connotes avoiding conflicts	.64
Good atmosphere between team members is not important for teamwork	.60
Teamwork means less responsibility than individual work	.59
Teamwork means slow task performance	.54

Table 4: The matrix structure of the second isolated factor.

	Saturation
I often have a very different opinion from other team members.	.68
The most difficult thing in teamwork is to wait for someone to do his/her job so that I can do mine.	.56
It is difficult for me to make a compromise although it can accelerate task performance.	.52
Teamwork means that I have to listen to other people's orders.	.49
Teamwork means that sometimes I have to completely abandon my idea how a problem should be solved.	.49
Teamwork connotes work with a lot of strangers.	.46

item of the resulting factor was "When I find myself in an argument or discussion, I can clearly defend my position" with the saturation of .70. The scale reliability was $\alpha = .834$. It could be defined as satisfactory despite the fact that it was lower than the previously established one (.960, according to Tovilović et al., 2009).

Considering the fact that the single factor structure of the assertiveness scale was confirmed in our sample, assertiveness will be operationalized as the total in all items. The distribution of the respondents' answers was curved towards higher scores, indicating the increased level of assertiveness in the test sample. Table 2 shows the scores on the assertiveness scale obtained by the respondents in this research.

Factor analysis of the Scale of Attitudes towards Teamwork

The analysis of the Scale of Attitudes towards Teamwork shows that it has low but satisfactory reliability, Cronbach's alpha is .685, when the item 5 is excluded ("Working in a team means that everyone knows individual tasks and that he/she must do his/her own part of the task"). The data suitability for factor analysis was

determined using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin indicator, which yielded .69 and Bartlett's test, which was statistically significant ($p=.000$). The factor analysis of principal components was performed using Promax rotation. Two isolated factors explain 34.49%, i.e. slightly more than a third of the total variance.

The first factor of the Scale of Attitudes towards Teamwork is saturated with five items and explains 23.19% of the variance. It is best described by the items "Good mutual communication is not important for a teamwork" and "Teamwork connotes avoiding conflicts". These items describe the factor in a positive direction. Other items that describe the factor are connected with the team atmosphere, communication and efficiency. All items that describe the first factor are aimed at specific features and importance of the group dynamics, which is reflected through communication, conflict, atmosphere, division of responsibility. It can be said that this factor describes the failure to recognise the teamwork dynamics and its importance for the successful and efficient task performance. The factor is called Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics. Table 3 shows the saturation of the first factor.

Table 5: The significance of the regression function for the factor Significance of the Group Dynamics.

	Model	Square Total	Df	Square Middle	F	Significance
1	Regression	27.19	1	27.19	29.87	.000
	Residual	255.79	281	.91		
	Total	282.98	282			

Table 6: The significance of the regression function for the factor Preservation of Individuality.

	Model	Square Total	Df	Square Middle	F	Significance
1	Regression	3.73	1	3.73	3.77	.053
	Residual	278.28	281	.99		
	Total	282.02	282			

The second factor is described by the six items and it explains 11.31% of the variance. It is best described by the attitudes “*I often have a very different opinion from other team members*” and “*The most difficult thing in teamwork is to wait for someone to do his/her job so that I can do mine*”. Other items other factors are directed towards the position of an individual in a team and the processes that describe how to fit an individual idea into a group problem-solving. This factor can be called Orientation towards Individuality. The item saturations of the second factor are shown in Table 4.

The factor score distribution of the respondents is described using descriptive statistics indicators. The factor Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics achieved the minimum of -1.67 and the maximum of 3.34. The skewness indicator (.88) designates that most values are lower than average. The kurtosis indicator (.52) shows that the distribution seems “more peaked” than normal, i.e. the respondents’ results are grouped around a central value to a greater extent. The respondent score distribution of the factor Orientation Towards Individuality ranges from -2.96 to 3.38. The skewness indicator is close to 0 (-.06), the distribution of answers is not shifted to lower or higher scores. The kurtosis indicator is .32, the score distribution is “more peaked” than normal.

Testing of the scale of assertiveness as a predictor of willingness for teamwork

Regression analysis

Regression analyses tried to determine whether, based on the respondents’ scoring on the Scale of Assertiveness, their responses towards teamwork could be anticipated using the obtained attitude factors - Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics and Orientation Towards Individuality. The independent, predictor variable in

both analyses was the scoring on the Scale of Assertiveness, while the criterion, the dependent variable was the respondents’ scoring on the factors Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics and Orientation Towards Individuality.

Based on the conducted regression analysis, it can be concluded that the respondents’ scores on the Scale of Assertiveness significantly predict the factor Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics. Table 5 presents the significance of the regression function. The predictor variable predicts 9.6% of the criterion variable. Assertiveness anticipates the attitudes on Inability to Identify the Team Dynamics in the negative direction ($\beta = -.31$).

Based on the results of regression analysis, it can be concluded that the subjects with the higher scores on the Scale of Assertiveness can recognise the teamwork dynamics better, as well as its importance for effective and efficient task performance. The respondents with lower scores on a scale of assertiveness are more inclined to associate teamwork with conflict avoiding, less individual responsibility and a lesser degree of efficiency.

The regression function that examines whether the respondents’ scoring on a scale of assertiveness anticipates orientation towards individuality (the second obtained scale factor on attitudes towards teamwork) is on the verge of statistical significance. The detailed figures are given in Table 6. Assertiveness anticipates the attitudes on this factor in the negative direction ($\beta = -.12$); however, the percentage of explained variance is small and represents only 1.3% of the explained variance.

The higher the respondents’ scoring on the scale of assertiveness anticipates the lower individuality orientation. In other words, the respondents with lower scores on the applied scale of assertiveness have difficulties to compromise and they express a different opinion from the other team members more often. Also, it is difficult for them to wait for others to do their part of the task.

However, this correlation is low and on the verge of statistical significance; accordingly, individuality orientation in a teamwork can be anticipated in a small percentage of the respondents' assertiveness.

The results suggest that assertiveness can predict how the respondents perceive the team dynamics. The assertive respondents are more likely to recognise and value the atmosphere and communication of teamwork. The orientation towards individuality and independence in problem-solving are lower significantly associated with assertiveness.

DISCUSSION

This study, with a sample comprising 284 students of final years, confirms the single-factor structure of the applied assertiveness scale (Tovilović *et al.*, 2009). In the sample, the respondents' scores are more often directed towards higher results (deviating from the normal distribution in the positive direction), which may be the consequence of the sampling and the fact that the participants have already acquired some skills in the field of assertiveness. Furthermore, it can be interpreted by the circumstance that during their prior education, the respondents had an opportunity to develop their communication skills and encountered teamwork with mainly positive experience (only 7% of the respondents stated a negative experience).

Created by the authors of the study, the applied questionnaire for assessment of attitudes toward teamwork shows a two-factor structure. The first isolated factor is related to the recognition of team dynamics and it groups items that are directly related to key elements of teamwork. They refer to the importance of communication, conflict resolution, division of responsibility, efficiency and general team atmosphere. The second factor is described by the items that show more closely the relationship of the respondents towards their own position within the team. The evaluation of the respondents refers to some types of behaviour that let the individual contribution prevail over the teamwork.

The questionnaire that was applied in this study needs additional corrections, primarily in creating a large number of items that would clarify each of the obtained factors and thus contribute to a more explicit insight of the attitudes towards teamwork. The particularly interesting factor is the one that refers to the understanding of the individual place within the team Orientation Towards Individuality, due to the lack of the clearly confirmed relation with the degree of assertiveness and its effects on the individual teamwork behaviour.

Since the set objective of this study was to determine the ability to predict the behaviour of an individual in a team that comes from his/her attitude and knowledge of rudimentary teamwork characteristics and the degree of assertiveness, the obtained results confirm that people with higher score on a scale of assertiveness have a

more positive attitude towards teamwork. Namely, those who achieve higher scores on a scale of assertiveness show a better understanding of team dynamics, i.e. the results can be interpreted in terms of their more positive attitudes towards open communication among team members, accepting the fact that conflicts are inevitable, understanding the importance of good team atmosphere arising from such communication, positive attitude towards accepting their own responsibility for achieving the common objective and positive attitude towards the team efficiency. Moreover, the respondents with higher scores on the scale of assertiveness tend to collaborate with other team members sometimes, if necessary, abandon their individual ideas and make compromises that improve team efficiency to carry on its goal. The respondents with lower levels of assertiveness more often express willingness to independently perform the task and accept compromise solutions more arduously. However, the relationship between the degree of assertiveness and this kind of behaviour is not clearly confirmed in the study (statistical significance is .05). It can, therefore, be concluded that although the skills and attitudes necessary for good incorporation into teamwork may be associated with greater assertiveness, in this case, assertiveness does not clearly anticipate such behaviour. It is possible that these results are the consequence of the research mode used to examine attitudes towards teamwork in this study (it is necessary to expand the scale of attitudes towards teamwork). On the other hand, in social relations, assertiveness is often associated with a type of aggression which is defined as socially desirable (Wolpe, 1990). One of assertiveness characteristics is the ability to clearly express disagreement and express confrontation in a socially acceptable manner. Such behaviour is not unfavourable for teamwork, yet individuals with a more pronounced assertiveness may be more aware of their own attitudes, more persistent in advocating their ideas and willing to confront, as well as more inclined to recognise such situations as their assertive rights in responding to the defined items. With regard to one of the key characteristics of teamwork that relates precisely to the fact that the opinion of each member of the team is equally important and desirable, the ability and willingness of an individual to expose his/her own attitude should be encouraged. The research results are insufficiently clear concerning the effect of such behaviour on teamwork.

Since the study objective was to determine the possibility of predicting the individual attitudes and behaviour in a team according to the result achieved using the scale of assertiveness, the results support the use of this scale as a significant help in the team formation. Additionally, education programmes for students and the general population in the area of communication skills, especially assertiveness skill, can contribute to fostering positive attitudes towards teamwork and develop skills and preferences of an individual to become a successful

team member. Bearing in mind the presence and importance of teamwork as a professional skill, as well as an educational competence that is increasingly popular in the contemporary business environment, the understanding of the relationship between assertiveness and attitudes towards teamwork can improve educational programmes in the field of assertiveness.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study suggest that assertiveness can predict how the respondents perceive the team dynamics. The assertive respondents are more likely to recognise and value the atmosphere and communication of teamwork. The study confirms that people with higher score on a scale of assertiveness have a more positive attitude towards teamwork. They also have a better understanding of team dynamics. Theoretically, the study results support the hypothesis of the dimensional approach to measuring assertiveness and confirm

that the scale of assertiveness has a unique object of measurement, as well as the idea that an individual behaviour in a team structured environment can be improved through the development of personal assertiveness, i. e. through assertiveness trainings. Consequently, in practice, a greater individual satisfaction in such work environment and a better work performance can be expected, which should primarily provide benefits to end-users of the tested expert profiles. In the areas of formal and informal education, there is a constant need to improve decision-making skills, recognise the positive aspects of decisions made on the basis of a compromise, increase the tolerance for opinion diversity and personal time management (i.e. increased tolerance for the time required for team members to complete their part of the job responsibility). Assertiveness trainings can, therefore, help students, workers, clients etc. improve their communications and become better at verbalizing openly what they wish in various situations in life without being aggressive or submissive.

LESTVICA ASERTIVNOSTI KOT NAPOVEDNIK PRIPRAVLJENOSTI ZA TIMSKO DELO

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POVZETEK

Raziskovanje asertivnosti kot socialne in komunikacijske veščine, ki je tudi predmet naše raziskave, je aktualno predvsem na področju poklicnega in visokošolskega izobraževanja ter v procesu upravljanja. Cilj naše raziskave je bil preučiti razmerje med stopnjo asertivnosti in pripravljenostjo za delo v skupini ter raziskati, v kolikšni meri lahko raven asertivnosti napoveduje odnos do timskega dela. Merilo asertivnosti in lestvice odnosov do timskega dela smo uporabili na vzorcu 284 vprašanih. Rezultati so pokazali, da imajo ljudje z višjimi rezultati na lestvici asertivnosti bolj pozitivno stališče do timskega dela, prav tako bolje razumejo skupinsko dinamiko. Lestvica asertivnosti je torej orodje napovedovanja pripravljenosti za timsko delo. Še pomembneje pa je, da je raziskava potrdila, da se lahko vedenje posameznika v skupinsko strukturiranem okolju izboljša z osebnim razvojem asertivnosti, kar v nadaljevanju pripomore k večjemu zadovoljstvu posameznikov znotraj skupine in k večji uspešnosti skupine kot celote. Razumevanje odnosa med asertivnostjo in timskim delom pa je ključno tudi v visokošolskih in izobraževalnih ustanovah, saj omogoča izboljšanje kurikulumov in izobraževalnih programov na področju razvijanja asertivnosti.

Ključne besede: visoko šolstvo, asertivnost, komunikacija, timsko delo, lestvica asertivnosti, poslovanje

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