RELATION BETWEEN THE EMOTIONAL CONFLICTS AND SELF-CONCEPT AMONG ADOLESCENTS

UDC 159.923.2-053.6

Jelisaveta Todorović

Faculty of Philosophy Niš

Abstract. *The problem which has been studied is the relation of the emotional conflicts and self-concept among adolescents. An emotional conflict is a simultaneous appearance of the intensive opposite emotions. There are four kinds of conflicts in R. Plutchik's theory:*
1) reproduction/protection conflict
2) aggression/ protection conflict
3) rejection/incorporation conflict
4) orientation/research conflict
We are interested in persons with intensive emotional conflicts who evaluated themselves differently on different aspect of self-concept according to G. Opačić (general competence, body image, physical abilities, social acceptance, general self-esteem, intellectual self, emotionalism/rationalism, moral negativism, misanthropy, and externalization) in comparison to persons without conflicts.
It was shown that the persons with emotional conflicts have lower self/esteem, lower physical attractiveness while misanthropy and externalization, as defensive maneuvers, are more intensive.

Key words: *emotional conflict, self-concept, adolescence*

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

The problem which has been studied in this research is the relation of the emotional conflicts and self-concept among adolescents. Development of the idea of oneself neither begins nor ends in the period of adolescence, but certainly the main problem in this period of development is *the problem of identity*. Who am I, What am I valued for ... are the questions usually asked by boys and girls in the age between 16 and 18. The formation of the idea of oneself as a conscious part of the identity is connected with the great deal of factors; for example it depends on sex, family influences, physical characteristics, social

origin, education status etc. There is a number of researches on the theme of connection between different aspects of self-concept and sex, intelligence, locus of control, success in school, social status, family numeracy, family incompleteness etc. Empirical results confirmed that the quoted factors are mostly connected with self-esteem being the global evaluative dimension of self-concept. The idea of oneself can be more or less differentiated, while determined evaluative judgments are connected with the characteristics of the picture of oneself, giving different importance to these characteristics in the structure of self-knowledge. That leads to the establishment of the evaluative hierarchy of different characteristics of self-concept. The stability of the idea of oneself depends on the stability of self-esteem. Depressive persons create the idea of themselves by selecting the negative information. According to A.Elis&A.Beck it is the negative self-concept which integrates irrational ideas which reinforce this experience.

Searching for the inner mechanisms of the unclear identity, that is more exactly, the unstable idea of oneself, proceeding from a thesis that contradictory self estimations which are manifested through the choice of contradictory personal characteristics can be connected with the presence of the emotional conflict, or ambivalence towards primary emotions as explained by R. Plutchik in 1983. The problem we are interested in is the connection between the conflict and self-concept.

There are eight primary emotions:

1) aggression is emotion connected with the exclusion of an obstacle, matched by rage
2) incorporation is reception of the exterior stimuli
3) protection is emotion whose aim is to avoid danger, matched by fear
4) orientation is reaction to an unknown stimulus, something like surprise
5) deprivation is emotion connected to the loss of an object or some psychological field similar to sadness
6) research is emotion connected to the examination of the environment, like curiosity
7) reproduction – emotion which appears during extension of species, like joy
8) rejection is emotion which appears when something harmful enters the body, matched by disgust

Simultaneous appearance of intensive opposite emotions is known as emotional conflict. There are four kinds of conflict in Plutchik's theory:

1) aggression / protection conflict
2) reproduction / deprivation conflict
3) rejection / incorporation conflict
4) orientation / research conflict

196 secondary school pupils aged 18 took part in the research, which deals with the relation between existence of some quoted emotional conflicts and different aspects of self-concept, that is, with how they estimate their intellectual/physical abilities, strong emotion, physical appearance, social acceptance and global self-esteem as well (Rosenberg's scale). I have been also interested in whether the emotional conflict are connected with defense mechanisms of rationalization (externalization of reasons for success and failure in one's life, external locus of control) and projection. Besides the scale of self-concept by Dr Goran Opacic, which contains the aspects I was talking about,

the scales are given which measure the tendency to moral negativism, misanthropy and externalization.

The research was detailed and it encompasses the profile of index emotion, the test of R. Plutchik and scales of self-concept by G. Opacic, which include Rosenberg's scale of global self-esteem. In this article only the most important results related to the problem of the researchwill be shown.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Following the use of psychological instruments (PIE, Plutchik's test of emotions and the scale of self-concept by G. Opačić), two groups of interviewees were formed: those who indicated having some emotional conflicts during the emotional profile test, and those who do not have any emotional conflict. After the statistical comparison of these two groups according to their different characteristics of self-concept, the following results were obtained:

Table 1. Wilks' Lambda

Test function	Wilks'Lambda	Hi-square	df	significance
1	0.803	21.024	10	0.021

Using discriminating analysis we came to the components which best separate those groups in the area of variables. It is evident that there are statistically significant global differences between the two groups, while in Table 2 the coefficients of discriminating function and the coefficients of structure show total correlations between discriminating variable and standardized canonical discriminating function:

Table 2. Coefficient review
Degree of self-esteem Coefficient of discriminating function Structure coefficients

	Function 1	Function 1
Global self-esteem	.602	.667
Misanthropy	−.399	−.579
Physical appearance	.271	.573
Externality	-.292	-.418
Global competence	.073	.394
Social evaluation	.081	.393
Physical self	.220	.324
Moral negativism	.073	.272
Intellectual self	−.407	.105
Emotionalism - rationalism	.208	.097

The highest coefficient of discriminating function is present in:
1) global self-esteem
2) misanthropy
3) estimate of physical attractiveness
4) externality (the external locus of control)

The group with emotional conflicts (51 of them) was divided according to the type of the emotional conflict, and then compared with the group without emotional conflicts, so we conclude the following:

Table 3. Wilks'Lambda

Wilks'Lambda	F	df 1	df 2	Signific.
0.516	1.597	40	335	0.0015

Multivariational analysis of variance shows that the differences between groups are significant and by coupled comparison of the interviewees, statistically important differences were discovered between groups without emotional conflicts and the groups with emotional conflicts (deprivation/reproduction and orientation/research).

Table 4. F values between groups

F values; df 10,88				
	G 1:1	G 2:2	G 3:3	G 4:4	G 5:5
G 1:1		1.982*	2.219*	1.803	0.844
G 2:2	1.982*		2.458*	1.646	0.969
G 3:3	2.218*	2.458*		0.701	1.5423
G 4:4	1.803	1.646	0.701		1.069
G 5:5	0.844	0.969	1.542	1.069	

* – p<0.05

G 1:1 – group without conflict
G 2:2 – group with deprivation/reproduction conflict
G 3:3 – group with orientation/research conflict
G 4:4 – group with rejection/incorporation conflict
G 5:5 – group with aggression/protection conflict

From Table 5 we can see that the greatest influence on the observed characteristics of self-concept followed by the separation of the interviewees into two groups with different conflicts and a group without conflict is exerted by the characteristics of emotionalism and misanthropy.

Table 5. Coefficient structure

Scale name	I	II	III	IV
Global competence	−.320	−.266	−.040	.078
Physical appearance	−.415	−.442	.419	.020
Physical self	−.026	−.326	−.481	−.169
Social evaluation	−.485	−.246	−.148	.657
Global self-esteem	−.686	.172	−.029	−.216
Emotion./rationalism	−.563*	.387	−.029	−.244
Intellectual self	−.132	−.094	.374	.284
Misanthropy	.535*	.308	−.042	.070
Externality	.079	.508	.039	.091
Moral negativism	.322	.026	.061	.463

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE CONCLUSION

The results have showen that the pupils without the emotional conflict much better estimate their global self-esteem and physical attractiveness, which shows a generally better self-acceptance, while the other aspects of self-concept are not much better estimated compared to the group of pupils with some of the emotional conflicts. The persons who do not have the expressed emotional conflict usually have lower misanthropy, which means more confidence in themselves and in others.The persons who are inside divided by contradictory feelings, who do not estimate themselves enough, explain the causes of their failures by the external causes and moral characteristics of people (externalization and misanthropy).

The results of further analyses of the data allow for more clear visualisation of the connections between the type of the conflict and the self-concept. The members of the groups differ a lot in the level of estimation, depending on whether their conflict is the deprivation/reproduction or orientation/research. The greatest differences between them are in the estimation of their own emotiveness (sensitivity to stressful events) and misanthropy. In the group with the reproduction/deprivation conflict there is a high level of emotiveness. That explains why such people, who estimate themselves as very sensitive, like to make friends and enjoy making friends, and at the same time they are not satisfied, because they often feel hurt and lonely. In the group with the orientation/research conflict, the estimation of misanthropy is the highest in comparison to all other groups, whether with a conflict or without it. These are the persons who hardly control their impulsiveness, although they wish to plan their behaviour in detail and achive a full self-control. That inconsistence in their behaviour makes them unsatisfied with themselves, and that makes their self-respect even lower, while on the other hand, it makes a projection of their own dissatisfaction with themselves onto others even greater (misanthropy).

Internal conflicts are a central problem of different theories concerning neurosis. According to the theory of Karen Horney, conflict stands for simultaneous presence of contradictory characteristics. Conflict blocks voluntary efforts and initiative. That leads to the fall of self-esteem, and intensifies defensive maneuvers. In our research, these are misanthropy and externalization, and the final result is a disturbance of the cohesive and stable picture of oneself.

Karen Horney considers that persons having the outstanding conflict and those who came to the level of neurosis have low awareness of their needs and feelings. Those persons are estranged from their selves and they are not capable of desiring something completely, since their desires are split. That is why K. Horney thinks that the essential conflict is more destructive than Freud thought, because the person is alienated from himself. The neurotic conflict devastates personality, makes the person helpless, isolated and unreliable. The lack of self-confidence makes one think of himself as others think of him. That enlarges one's complete dependence on others. All criticism and repulsion are endangering to that person. Manifestations of the energy separated in this way are total inefficiency, sluggishness and undecisiveness. In order to preserve self-esteem and to mask the inferiority complex in some important aspects of self-knowledge, the person sees other people as evil "Men are evel by nature, man is like perishable goods..."etc, which are the claims in the scale of misanthropy which we applied. Such a person

attributes success and failure to other circumstances he cannot influence, like "destiny determines what is going to happen to me, no matter what I have done to prevent evil from happening it will happen" etc, (those are the claims in the scale of externality). All those defensive maneuvers will be more intensive if the presence of emotional conflict is greater, and at the same time the decline of self-respect is more present which leads to insufficient integration of moral values in the adolescents of this age.

REFERENCES

1. Abernathy T.J. & Massad L. & Romano-Dwyer L. :"The relationship between smoking and self-esteem", Adolescence 1995, winter, 899-907.
2. Baron P.H. :"Self-esteem, ingratiation and evaluation of unknown others", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 1974,1, 36-45.
3. Beatty L.A.:"Effects of paternal absence on male adolescents, peer relations and self- image", Adolescence, 1995, winter, 873-880.
4. Bee L. H. & Mitchell S. :"The Developing Person" Harper& Row, New York I
5. Potocnk B.:"Priručnik PIE profil indeks emocija" Ljubljana 1990.
6. Blanc G. i Blanc R.: "Ego psihologija", Biblioteka Psiha, Zagreb 1985.
7. Buss A. & Briggs S. "Drama and the self in social interaction", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1984. Vol. 47, No. 6, 13 11-1324.
8. Davis J. :"Effects of communication about interpersonal process on the evolution of self-disclosure in dyads", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology l977. Vol 35, No 1.3 1-38.
9. Havelka N.:"Socijalna percepcija", Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva Beograd 1992
10. Hornaj K.: "Naši unutrašnji konflikti" Grafički zavod, Podgorica 1966.
11. Jones R.A., Sensenig J., Haley J."Self-descriptions: configurations of content and order effects", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 1974. 1, 3 6-45.
12. Kidwell J.S., Dunham R.M., Bacho R.A. :"Adolescent identity exploration a test of Erikson theory of transitional crisis", Adolescence, 1995, winter,7 85-793.
13. Kohut H.:"Analiza sebstva", Naprijed, Zagreb 1990.
14. Kostić P.: »Priručnik PIE-JRS« SDP Srbije, CPP Beograd, 1997.
15. Kraus A.:" Psychotherapy based on identity problems of depressives". American Journal of Psychotherapy, 1995. 2, 197-212
16. Lamovec T.:"Emocije i mehanizmi odbrane", Ljiljana Trlaja, Beograd 1997.
17. Oliver J.M., Paull J.C.:"Self-esteem and self-efficacy perceived parenting and a climate and deppression in university students" Journal of Clinical Psychology jul, 467-481.
18. Opačić G.: "Ličnost u socijalnom ogledalu", Institut za pedagoška istrazivanja, Beograd 1995.
19. Ryckman M., Robbins B., Thorton G.,Cantrell P.:"Development and validation physical self-efficacy scale" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 1982. Vol. 42, No. 5. 891-891.
20. Sclor E.L., Stidley C.A., Malspeis S. :"Behavioral correlates of differences between a. child's assessment and parents assessment of child's self-esteem" Journal of Development Behavioral Pediatry 1995. aug. 211-219.
21. Sigall H., Gould P.:"The effects of self-esteem and evaluator demandingness of effort expenditure", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 1977. Vol.35, No. 1, 12-20.
22. Schutz A.:"Coping with threats to self-esteem the differing patterns of subjects with high versus low trait self-esteem in first-person accounts", European Journal of Personality 1998. 12, 169-186.
23. Tesser H.:"Self-esteem maintenance in family dynamics", Journal of Personality Social Psychology 1980. Vol. 39, No. 1, 77-91.
24. Wayment H.A.,Taylor S.E. :"Self-evaluation processes motives, information use and self-esteem", Journal of Personality 1995. dec. 729-757.

POVEZANOST EMOCIONALNIH KONFLIKATA
I SELF-KONCEPTA ADOLESCENATA

Jelisaveta Todorović

Problem kojim smo se bavili u ovom istraživanju je povezanost emocionalnih konflikata i self-koncepta adolescenata. Emocionalni konflikt je istovremeno javljanje suprotnih emocija visokog intenziteta. U teoriji Roberta Plučika ima 4 vrste konflikata:

1) deprivacija-reprodukcija
2) agresija-zaštita
3) orijentacija-istraživanje
4) inkorporacija-odbacivanje

Interesovalo nas je da li osobe sa izraženim emocionalnim konfliktom drugačije procenjuju sebe na skalama self-koncepta (globalna kompetentnost, telesna privlačnost, fizički self, socijalna evaluacija, globalno samopoštovanje, intelektualni self, emocionalnost-racionalnost, mizantropija, eksternalnost, moralni negativizam) Gorana Opačića u odnosu na osobe bez konflikta. Pokazalo se da osobe sa konfliktom imaju niže samopoštovanje, nižu procenu telesne privlačnosti, a od odbrambenih manevara izraženiju mizantropiju i eksternalnost.

Ključne reči: *self koncept, emocionalni konflikt, adolescencija.*