

Developing the Components of a Self-Concept in Future Psychologists with the Method of Non-Author Drawing Psychoanalysis

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Abstract: The article reviews the phenomenon of self-concept as a dynamic system of the person's representations about him/herself, which originated on the basis of interactions with the environment. The leading scholars' ideas (R. Assagioli, N. Branden, W. James, A. Maslow, C. Rogers, K. Horney) about the content and components of a self-concept, its features, and role in personality development are determined. The authors also discuss the key advantages in developing self-concept components provided by the projective approach, one of which is the high psychocorrectional potential. The study was conducted with the aim of providing future psychologists with advanced approaches to developing a self-concept. The main method used in the paper is the non-author drawing psychoanalysis developed by Professor T. S. Yatsenko. It has been empirically proven that the method of non-author drawing psychoanalysis improves the self-concept components. In particular, it expands the idea of the self, reduces internal conflicts, destructive feelings about the self, and promotes openness to new experience, etc.

1. Introduction

The interest in the training of psychological personnel is determined by the urgent needs of a modern society in need of psychological assistance. The ability to provide psychological assistance is directly related to the professional and personal development of future psychologists. For successful professional development, future psychologists need such personal qualities and abilities that would contribute to social and professional mobility, dynamism, and their ability to adequately respond to changes in society. A special role is played by the self-concept, which could be considered as the central formation of the personality affecting all manifestations.

According to the dictionary of a practical psychologist (edited by S. Yu. Golovi), the self-concept is "a relatively stable, more or less conscious, unique system of the individual's self-image, on the basis of which he/she builds interaction with other people and relates to him/herself" [3]. In the history of psychology, the self-concept is defined as a multifaceted and multidimensional personality formation that defines behavior and activity (L. I. Bozhovich, R. Burns, W. James, I. S. Cohn, C. Rogers, and others). The researchers showed that the self-concept is a subsystem of a holistic, integral personality system (I. V. Baryshnikova); features of the structural components of the self-concept, determining communicative abilities, identified (J. A. Maksimenko). The national psychology, the concept of "self-image," "self-awareness," and "self-attitude" are close to the phenomenon of "self-concept."

For the first time, the phenomenon of self-concept was described by W. James, an American psychologist, founder of functionalism in psychology. He defined it as "a dynamic system of the individual's self-image associated with self-esteem" [5]. In his book, "Psychology," William James points to two components of self-concept: self-empirical (Me – I was the object of cognition) and the self-conscious (I – I as the subject of cognition). In the future, this separation formed the basis of most theories of "self-concept." However, the phenomenon of the self-concept achieved the greatest development in humanistic psychology, in particular in the works of its representatives A. Maslow, C. Rogers, and their followers. A. Maslow was the first to address the topic of self-concept and self-relationship, noting self-esteem as the basic need of a person [6].

Sharing the views of A. Maslow, N. Branden, a Canadian psychotherapist, considers a positive attitude towards himself/herself as an existential need and raises the question of the possibility of satisfying this need, the solution of which the author sees in the process of training and reflection of his/her dignity, competence in significant issues and self-worth [2]. C. Rogers strives to consider the integral “I” as a fundamental factor in the behavior and development of a person, by which he understands the “dynamic system of self-perceptions that arose based on human interaction with the environment and included an idea of oneself, an idea of one’s social role, an idea about physical condition and health, as well as goals and motives” [7]. In his writings, the researcher identifies the I-real (the system of man's ideas about himself at a given moment in time) and the I-ideal (the desired self-image in the future, including realized goals and objectives). A significant gap between these components of the self-concept can lead to anxiety, increased intrapersonal conflicts, and depression. According to K. Rogers’ theory of personality, anxiety signals the individual that his/her formed self-concept is in danger of disorganization. A frequent manifestation of anxiety, as a result of a mismatch of self-concept and experience, leads to neurosis and neurotic conditions. Relieving or reducing anxiety requires using psychological defense mechanisms, the purpose of which is to preserve and maintain the formed self-concept.

In the mainstream of psychodynamic psychology, the question of the role of self-concept in the harmonious formation of personality is also relevant. In particular, the American psychoanalyst K. Horney notes that the adequacy of the self-concept is associated with a person's knowledge of himself/herself, which should reflect his/her real abilities and aspirations (while at the same time, his/her attitude to him/herself should be positive). The author identifies several components of the self-concept: I-real, I-ideal, and I in the eyes of other people. Typically, these three components should coincide. Only in this case, we can talk about the healthy development of the personality and its resistance to neurosis. A significant discrepancy between the real and ideal I can lead to a neurotic conflict due to the unattainability of the ideal. The disparity between the I-real and I in the eyes of other people also leads to neurosis.

Moreover, in this case, it does not matter whether others think about a person better or worse than he/she thinks about himself/herself. According to C. Horney, the main task of psychological protection is not overcoming the conflict between society and a person. Still, it is about matching the opinion of a person about himself/herself and the opinion of others about him/her, i.e., to coordinate the components of self-concept [4]. R. Assagioli, the author of the theory of psychosynthesis, notes that structural changes in the self-concept of personality are the result of the processes of “personification” (the desire to be oneself, self-acceptance) and “personalization” (Broadcast yourself to the world, other people as a strong or powerful person). Also, the researcher identifies the concept of subpersonality, which is a dynamic substructure of the personality and has a relatively independent existence [1].

In contemporary literature, the following basic methods for the development of self-concepts are highlighted: psychological training and projective methods. Among the projective techniques of diagnosis and development of personal properties, a considerable role is given to psychological drawing, the advantage of which is its high psychocorrective potential due to the integration of the conscious and unconscious spheres of the psyche, as well as simplicity and accessibility in the application. This makes it possible to use them like an express diagnosis, expanding the age range for psychological assistance through work with non-verbal material, etc.

In modern practical psychology, the author's method of deep psychocorrection T. S. Yatsenko [8] is gaining relevance. Its purpose is the development of a holistic and harmonious personality in the unity of its conscious and unconscious aspects, leveling (weakening) of internal contradictions that cause inconsistency in the structure of the self-concept, as well as maladaptive behavior of the subject. In the psychodynamic approach, a special role is given to the phenomenon of psychological defense and its role in the functioning of the psyche. C. Rogers noted that the goal of protection is to preserve and support the formed self-concept. T. S. Yatsenko complements his view, pointing out that psychological protection supports a subjective sense of integrity of the psyche, masks internal contradictions, provides a sense of “I” strength, social adaptation, and anxiety reduction by illusory ways of deviating from reality. The protective system of personality is based on conditional values that are individually unique and are formed under the influence of identification with primary libidinal objects. Normative values contain social rules accepted in society. The mismatch of conditional and normative values is one aspect of the intrapersonal conflict.

This method synthesizes the following approaches: (1) the humanistic approach to understanding the personal potential of the subject; (2) the phenomenological approach to understanding the individual identity of the psyche of each person; (3) the psychoanalytic approach to understanding the psyche in its logical and systematic ordering of both the conscious and unconscious spheres; (4) the gestalt approach brings completeness of the phenomenological cognition of the psyche in the integrity of its emotive, cognitive and behavioral aspect. In deep psychocorrection, various forms of work with a psychological pattern are present. For instance, psychoanalysis of a complex of thematic psycho-drawings, psychoanalysis of a non-author's drawing, psychocorrectional work using tattoo illustration. Among the methods of deep psychocorrection, the method of non-author drawing psychoanalysis is of particular interest. This method is used as a diagnostic and psycho-correctional technique, contributing to the knowledge of the unconscious tendencies of the subject's psyche, and also allows you to study projections that are infantile in nature and are transferred to the actual situation of the person's interaction with other people. Among the advantages of this method, we need to note the following: relative speed of work (in comparison with other similar methods), lack of preliminary training of both a psychologist and a respondent, the process of diagnosis in its unity with psychocorrection, the "depth" of psychocorrectional impact (the ability to identify inconsistencies of the psyche at various levels: I-real and I-ideal, conditional and normative values, etc.).

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted on the basis of the Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy "V. I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University" (Yalta) during 2018-2019. In total, 52 students of 1 and 4 courses, areas of training "Psychology" took part in the study. 28 students made up the experimental group, and 24 students made up the control group. The study was carried out in several stages. The first stage is the diagnosis of the current level of development of the components of the self-concept in the control and experimental group. The second is the development of the self-concept. The third is the re-diagnosis of students to identify the dynamics of the components of the self-concept.

In the experimental group, in order to develop the components of the self-concept, the method of non-author drawing psychoanalysis was applied. The peculiarity of work with which is expressed in the respondent's objectification of a drawing made by another author or artist, which opens up the possibility of using drawings other than standardized in the work of a psychologist (CAT, TAT techniques, etc.). In working with a non-author's drawing, the respondent can select one or several interested (causing him an emotional response) drawings and offer them for psychoanalysis in order of emotional significance. As our experience shows, upon interpretation, the psychological meaning of the pictures will be supplemented and deepened with each subsequent, which allows for a complete study of the internal characteristics of the psyche. The basis of psychoanalytic work using an unauthorized drawing is the dialogue interaction between the psychologist and the respondent, through which the elements of the drawing are filled with individual content. Dialogue interactions with the subject allow one to diagnose the emotional priorities of infantile and traumatic origin, which determine the direction of personality activity. When working with a psychological drawing, cognitive comprehension by the subject of emotional experiences is essential. This kind of analysis is carried out in the unity of conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche.

To diagnose the dynamics of the components of the self-concept, the method of S. R. Panteleev ("Methodology for the study of self-relationship") was chosen. It includes the following scales: isolation, self-confidence, self-leadership, reflected self-attitude, self-worth, self-acceptance, self-attachment, internal conflict, and self-accusation. This technique allows one to identify the components of the self-concept in the context of personal representations about yourself, your self-expression, and generalized feeling in your address.

3. Results

In the course of working with a non-author's drawing, we invited the study participants to present their content of the drawings they chose, to identify their primary elements, to become an emotionally close image and verbalize their feelings. Further, the participants gave the name to the drawing, indicated important and secondary symbols, aspects of the drawing with which they associated themselves, expressed their feelings on behalf of specific images, their attitude to other characters in the drawing. We took into account the change in the plotline of the drawings. Upon completion of the psycho-correctional work using the method of

psychoanalysis of a non-author's drawing, participants noted the following: more significant understanding of their relationships in the family and with partners, awareness of the transfer of parent-child relationships to relationships with work colleagues or intimate relationships, development of reflection of one's feelings and emotions, awareness of one's destructive tendencies, conflict situations and ways to resolve them.

Comparing the results of primary and secondary diagnostics according to the method of S. R. Pantelev in the control and experimental group, we obtained the following results (Fig. 1). In the experimental group, the closure rate decreased, which indicates an increase in openness, deep self-awareness, partial overcoming of psychological defenses. An increase in self-confidence indicates a focus on the success of endeavors, an assessment of oneself as an independent, strong-willed and reliable person; the indicator of self-leadership and self-worth remained at an average level, which is manifested in the ability to personal control, good adaptability in familiar situations and a tendency to realistic assessment of one's qualities. An increase in the reflected self-relation indicates an expansion of participants' perceptions of the ability to arouse respect, sympathy in other people, and reduce socio-perceptual distortions. Increasing levels of self-acceptance and self-attachment indicate the severity of a sense of sympathy for oneself, agreement with one's inner impulses, acceptance of one's strengths, and criticism of one's shortcomings. A significant decrease in the indicators of internal conflict and self-accusation allows us to conclude that partial resolution of internal disputes, a reduction of destructive tendencies and negative emotions towards the self, as well as a decrease in guilt, which favorably affects all components of the self-concept.

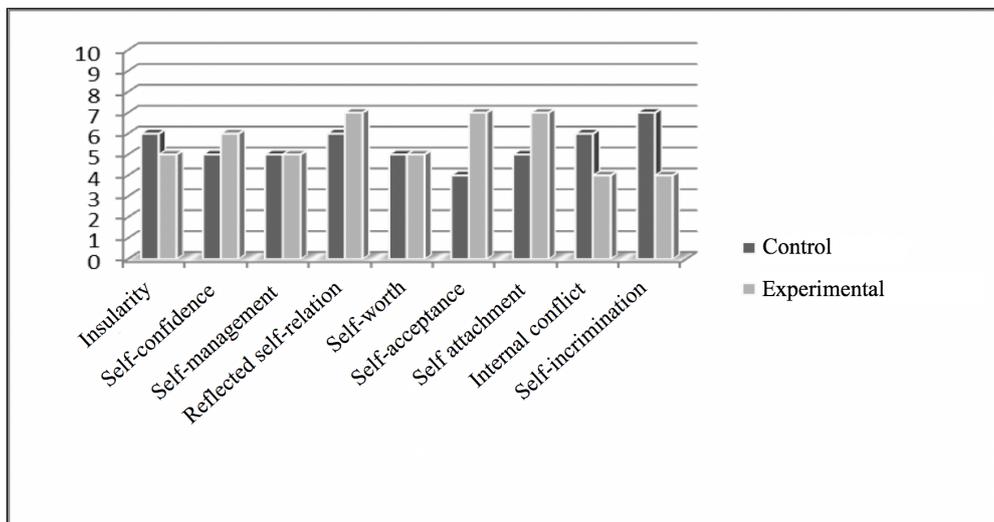


Fig. 1. A comparative analysis of the dynamics of the components of the self-concept by the method of S.R. Pantelev (data presented in the walls).

4. Discussion

In the psychodynamic approach of T. S. Yatsenko, the concept of “personal correctness” is defined, which contains an account of the objective characteristics of psychological health and subjective individual aspects (positive for a particular person). Personal correctness involves not only the mental well-being but also the realization of creative potential, harmonization of the personality, coordination of all its components, including the elements of the self-concept. The opposite concept of “personal correctness” is the concept of “personality destruction”, which creates barriers in communication, weakens contacts with other people, reduces the level of personality reflexivity, actualizes regressive manifestations in active (aggression) and passive (depression) forms. When conducting in-depth psychocorrection, we try to minimize personality destruction, bringing a person closer to the state of personal correctness.

The results of the study indicate the positive dynamics of the components of the self-concept in the experimental group after undergoing psychocorrectional work using the method of psychoanalysis of a non-author's drawing. Positive dynamics include the harmonization and integration of various aspects of the psyche (emotional and rational, I-real and I-ideal, conditional and normative values), openness to new experience and the ability to use it constructively; awareness of deviations from reality, which are based on the action of

psychological defense; knowing your personal characteristics, needs and opportunities, accepting yourself for who you are, developing the ability to accept the environment and other people, accepting the interests of others without value; decreasing guilt and intrapersonal conflicts, regressive mental trends (tendency to isolation, self-isolation, self-punishment, self-accusation); reflection of one's own feelings and emotions, which positively affects professional activity.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the self-concept is a dynamic system of self-perceptions that arose on the basis of human interaction with the environment, which includes a picture of oneself, a picture of one's social role, a picture of one's physical condition and health, as well as goals and motives. Contradictions in its structure can lead to intrapersonal conflicts, actualize anxiety, destructive tendencies of the psyche, which are manifested in isolation, self-accusation, a pronounced negative attitude towards one's personality, self-punishment, etc. For successful professional activities, future psychologists need a stable self-concept that will ensure social and professional mobility and dynamism and will allow developing optimal strategies for interacting with clients in the context of psychological assistance.

Also, the question of methods for the development of the self-concept, among which there is a training and projective approach, seems relevant. The projective approach (in particular, the methods based on a psychological drawing) have a number of advantages, a high psychocorrective potential. Moreover, they are simple and affordable to use. In our study, for the development of the self-concept of future psychologists, we applied the method of psychoanalysis of a non-author's drawing. The method is used as a diagnostic and psycho-corrective technique that is integrated at various levels of the psyche (I-real and I-ideal, conditional and normative values) and reduces the regressive tendencies and personality degradation. In addition, it neutralizes the action of psychological defenses that would positively affect the development of all components of self-concept.

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