

ADAPTATION PROCEDURE OF THE TEST OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract. *The problem of assertiveness as a condition of self-actualization is actively developed by both, theorists and practitioners. In order to explore it, more than 30 different tests are being developed by the scientists. However, most of them have common drawback.*

In reality, behavioural acts that in one cultural environment are perceived as manifestations of assertiveness, in other context it can be interpreted as aggression or perceived as completely unacceptable. The purpose of this study was to select an assertiveness test created in a similar culture, translate it into Latvian and test for reliability. Both, direct and reverse translation was carried out, which was discussed with the author of the test. Repeated pilot testing indicate to high reliability of a translated version of the test.

Keywords: *aggressiveness, assertiveness, reliability of the test, self-actualization, test.*

Introduction

After publication of the book by the American scientist A. Maslow, in which he proposed the concept of self-actualization as the goal of human life, the scientific literature opened a discussion about personality qualities that contribute to this debate. Self-actualization, according to the author of the concept, is the desire of a person to maximize his/her full potential, abilities and opportunities on the way to realization of his/her goals of life (Maslow, 1943).

Assertiveness was recognized as an indispensable condition for self-actualization. Gading defines assertiveness as one's ability to act on the basis of self-esteem, taking into account the opinions of other people, so that the behavior that manifests itself in interpersonal relationships remains within positive boundaries (Gading, 2020).

At the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the interest in the study of the phenomenon has increased. According to Peneva & Mavrodiev, this is explained that in the changing social and political situation in the world, which requires a search for means to strengthen human potential, could contribute to solving new problems (Peneva & Mavrodiev, 2013). At the same time, studies have confirmed positive effect of assertive behavior in solving professional problems.

It was necessary to design tests that would help to determine the level of development of the skills of assertive behavior of the individual in order to solve diagnostic and professional problems.

The main aim of this study is to find and to translate into Latvian and to adapt the assertiveness test, which was created and tested in a similar socio-cultural environment. Methods that were used in this study, was: translation and reverse translation of the test from the original language into Latvian (and vice versa); comparison of the original and reverse translation by introducing all necessary changes. The reliability of the test was ensured by repeated testing performed in the same sample.

Literature review

The author of the development of the theoretical foundations of assertiveness and their application in psychotherapeutic practice is considered to be A. Salter. In his works, he contrasts assertiveness with aggressiveness, manipulative behavior and blackmail (Salter, 2019). His fundamental ideas were developed in works of other researchers.

As reported by Alberti & Emmons (2008), assertiveness promotes equality in human relations, allows a person to act in the light of his or her interests, develops one's ability to stand up for himself or herself without hesitation, to express true feelings and enjoy one's rights without violating the rights of others (Alberti, & Emmons, 2008).

Assertiveness implies the right to say "no" without feeling guilty (Peneva & Mavrodiev, 2013). Thus, in the experiment of Swimmer & Ramanaiah, respondents were asked to respond to 3 sets reflecting conflict situations requiring the refusal of an unreasonable request.

Before that, the level of manifestation of assertive behavior of respondents was determined. Three groups were identified: with low, medium and high levels of assertiveness. Respondents with low levels of assertiveness were more likely than other respondents to fail to say "no" to an unreasonable request (Swimmer & Ramanaiah, 1985).

Assertiveness is a constructive behavior alternative to passivity, manipulation, and aggression. In assertiveness theories, the key point is to separate the concepts of assertiveness and aggressiveness. R. Baron & D. Richardson define aggression as any form of behavior aiming at harming another living being (Baron & Richardson, 1994).

Chamberlain reported that assertive behavior can be perceived as aggressive. He wrote that a successful employee who excels at surpassing his or her colleague in an attempt to get a promotion does not feel ill-will towards him. However, a colleague may perceive such behavior as an act of aggression. Thus, the author concludes that assertiveness is better understood as a moderate aggression,

usually unrelated to the intention to harm or rise above another. Persistence seems to have more to do with instrumental or targeted aggression than with a hostile or retaliatory aggression. T. Pfafman agrees with this author (Chamberlain, 2009; Pfafman, 2020).

Therefore, according to Swimmer & Ramanaiah, this can be argued that assertive behavior is the golden means between aggressiveness and passivity, although it has some features of both (Swimmer & Ramanaiah, 1985).

A. Gatchpazian suggests to distinguish between passive, assertive and aggressive behavior according to the following criteria, according to Table 1.

*Table 1 Criteria for passive, assertive and aggressive behavior
 (according to A. Gatchpazian) (Gatchpazian, 2003)*

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Too scared to say what you think	Expresses self clearly and confidently	Expresses self with aggression and irritation/anger
Avoids eye contact	Maintains eye contact	Stares in a judgmental way
Speaks softly or weakly	Speaks firmly	Speaks loudly (e.g., shouting)
Reduces own self-esteem	Increases own self-esteem	Reduces others' self-esteem
Makes body smaller (e.g., slouching)	Firm yet welcoming posture	Closed posture (e.g., making body bigger)
Others' needs are put first	Self and others' needs are taken into account	Others' needs are put first
Can't say "no" to others' requests or demands	Is able to say no in a calm and direct way	Sais no in a aggressive and reactive way
Aims to please others	Aims to express needs	Aims to win

According to Fornell & Westbrook, an aggressive person tends to analyze an act after committing aggressive behaviour. Assertive - before aggressive behaviour is being committed (Fornell & Westbrook, 1979).

An important note regarding the stability of assertive behavior is made by I. Peneva & S. Mavrodiiev. They wrote that in the case of an imbalance between one's own and others' rights, human behavior usually becomes passive, aggressive or manipulative (manipulation here is viewed as a form of aggressive behavior (Peneva, & Mavrodiiev, 2013).

Assertive behavior contributes to the solution of professional problems. This is evidenced by the results of studies that are related to training of nurses (Gultekin, Ozdemir, & Budak, 2018; Kadam, & Naikare, 2018; Ben Cheriff et al., 2022), social work specialists (Stoykov, 2020), sales people (Fornell, & Westbrook, 1979). Assertive behavior has positive impact on academic success in school (Galata, 2018). Several studies suggest that manifestations of

assertiveness can be influenced by fear of negative assessment of the behavior of the subject by other people (Prabha & Babu, 2021).

Assertive behavior can be taught. Assessment acquired through special education reduces anxiety, increases self-esteem and self-confidence, and promotes academic success (Niusha, Farghadani, & Safari, 2012; Parray, Kumar, & David, 2020). Interest in the problem of assertive behavior requires creation of appropriate diagnostic tools. According to N. Esgi's calculations, today there are more than 30 different scales of self-esteem, which are widely used to measure and to evaluate assertiveness and dependence on social networks. But almost all of them need to be refined, because they do not have sufficient reliability and validity when they are used in different cultures (Esgi, 2016).

The reason for this is not only the differences in ideas about behavioral manifestations of aggressiveness inherent in a particular culture. There have been cases where, within the same culture, opposite results have been obtained when applying different assertiveness tests. For example, there are the results of two studies conducted at the same time in India.

The first, authored by I. Saradha, T. Sasikala, & B. Rathinasabapathy, argues that there is a statistically significant relationship between the level of development of assertiveness and demographic indicators (age) (Saradha, Sasikala, & Rathinasabapathy, 2022). The authors of another study reported that there is no statistically significant relationship between these phenomena (Nalini & Ganapathy, 2020).

The methodological basis of our work is the ideas of A. Salter and the interpretation of his ideas by V. Sheinov.

Methodology

For the translation into Latvian and reliability check, the assertiveness test of V. Sheinov (Sheinov, 2014) was chosen. It contains 26 statements, some of which relate to assertive behavior and the others to aggressive and passive behavior.

Responses to the statements were evaluated in Lickert's scale. After test being translated from Russian into Latvian, a reverse translation has been made, which was approved by the author. The students from the Faculty of Management and Education of Daugavpils University took part in pilot testing (n=50).

The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 63 years (46 women and 4 men). The median age was 27 years.

Questionnaires were sent to participants by e-mail. Respondents replied in the same way. To check the reliability, a month after the first, the second test was tested on the same respondents. When calibrating the answers, statistical data provided by the author of the test were used.

There is no information about assertiveness studies in Latvia scientific databases.

Research findings

The following form of the test is used by the authors (Table 2). For the international readership the paper is written in the English language, while the test is in the Latvian language with explanations in English, since the main aim of this study is to reflect of the process and the result of adapted test in the Latvian language.

Table2 Assertively Testing

One can choose the answers according to the following criteria: always - 1, often - 2, rarely - 3, never – 4

Jautājums (Question)	Vienmēr (Always) - 1	Bieži (Often) – 2	Reti (Rarely) - 3	Nekad (Never) – 4
1. Runājot ar kādu, es nespēju iebilst, pat ja domāju, ka manis paša viedoklis ir pareizāks. Man ir vieglāk noklusēt. 1. When talking to someone, I cannot object, even if I think my own opinion is more correct. It's easier for me to keep quiet.				
2. Dažādās sapulcēs es dodu priekšroku noklusēt, kad pastāv varbūtība, ka es nokļūšu stulbā stāvoklī. 2. In various meetings, I prefer to keep silent when there is a possibility that I will be perceived as stupid.				
3. Es izjūtu grūtības uzaicināt uz tikšanos sev interesantu cilvēku (piemēram, pretējā dzimuma pārstāvi). 3. This is difficult for me to invite an interesting person (for example, a representative of the opposite sex) to a meeting.				
4. Es mēdzu iepazīties ar cilvēkiem, pret kuriem es izjūtu līdzjūtību. Es negaidu, kamēr viņi spers pirmo soli. 4. I tend to get to know people I sympathize with. I don't wait for them to take the first step.				
5. Kad mani slavē un izsaka				

<p>komplimentus, es samulstu un nezinu, kā uz to reaģēt, es jūtos it kā ne savā ādā.</p> <p>5. When I am praised and complimented, I'm embarrassed and don't know how to react to it, I feel as if I'm not in my own skin.</p>				
<p>6. Runājot par kaut ko svarīgu vai ar kādu, no kura esmu atkarīgs/a, es apjūku un jūtos nepārliecinoši.</p> <p>6. When I talk about something important or with someone I am addicted to or I get confused and feel unconvincing.</p>				
<p>7. Man ir ļoti grūti sākt sarunu ar ierēdņiem un vadītājiem, pat ja man vienkārši viņiem kaut kas ir jāpasaka.</p> <p>7. It is very difficult for me to start a conversation with officials and managers, even if I just have to say something to them.</p>				
<p>8. Es iestājos par savām tiesībām.</p> <p>8. I stand for my rights</p>				
<p>9. Es iestājos par savām tiesībām.</p> <p>9. I stand up for my rights.</p>				
<p>10. Es nekautrējos norādīt visiem, kas strādā, atpūšas vai dzīvo vienā telpā ar mani, lai viņi piedalītos kārtības uzturēšanā.</p> <p>10. I am not ashamed to point out to everyone who works, rests or lives in one room with me so that they participate in maintaining order.</p>				
<p>11. Man ir grūti ieskatīties acīs cilvēkam, ar kuru man ir atšķirīgs viedoklis.</p> <p>11. It's hard for me to look into the eyes of someone with whom my opinion differs.</p>				
<p>12. Man ir grūtības lūgt palīdzību.</p> <p>12. I have difficulties asking for a help.</p>				
<p>13. Ja sarunu biedra uzvedībā ir kaut kas, kas traucē sarunas norisei, man ir pietiekami daudz apņēmības viņam/ai par to pateikt.</p> <p>13. If there is something in the partner's behavior that interferes with the conversation, I have a determination to tell him/her about it.</p>				

14. Es ļauju no sevis vīt virves. 14. I allow to wind ropes from myself.				
15. Vai jūs kādreiz kautrējaties no cilvēkiem vai mēģināt nenokļūt noteiktās situācijās, jo nevēlaties justies neērti? 15. Are you sometimes shy and stay away from certain situations because you do not want to feel uncomfortable?				
16. Jums ir neveikli atgādināt viesmīlim par sevi, ja viņš jūs neapkalpo, bet gan sāk apkalpot apmeklētājus, kuri ir ieradušies vēlāk? 16. It is awkward for you to remind the waiter about yourself if he does not serve you, but starts serving visitors who have arrived later?				
17. Ja kādam nav taisnība, vai jums ir neērti viņam uz to norādīt? 17. If someone is wrong, are you embarrassed to point it to these people.				
18. Man ir grūti kādam izteikt komplimentus vai uzslavēt. 18. It is hard for me to compliment or praise someone.				
19. Vai Jūs jūtaties neērti lūgt viesmīlim dārgā restorānā nomainīt jūsu ēdienu, ja tas ir pagatavots slikti vai ir slikti pasniegts? 19. Do you feel uncomfortable asking a waiter in an expensive restaurant to change your food if it is cooked poorly or is poorly served?				
20. Vai jums ir grūtības aizstāvēt savu viedokli, ja tas ir pretrunā cilvēka viedoklim, kuru jūs cienāt? 20. Do you have trouble defending your point of view if it contradicts the opinion of a person you respect?				
21. Es vērtēju savu uzvedību objektīvi. 21. I judge my behavior objectively.				
22. Man nācās attaisnoties un atvainoties par savu uzvedību. 22. I had to make excuses and apologize for my behavior.				
23. Es uztraucos par mīļajiem, kad viņiem ir problēmas.				

23. I worry about loved ones when they have problems.				
24. Man ļoti svarīgs ir citu viedoklis. 24. The opinion of others is very important for me.				
25. Man ir jābūt loģiskam, pieņemot lēmumus. 25. I have to be logical in making decisions.				
26. Man ir grūtības atzīt, ka es nesapratu skaidrojumu (uzdevumu). 26. I'm having trouble to admit that I didn't understand the explanation.				

The key of the Test: A26.

1. Before calculating the results, you need to make an inversion No. 1,9,10,13,21, replacing with: $1 \Rightarrow 4$, $2 \Rightarrow 3$, $3 \Rightarrow 2$, $4 \Rightarrow 1$.

2. To calculate the total of all points.

If the sum is less than 66, uncertainty (passivity) is more characteristic, if more than 77 – there is a tendency towards aggression. In the range of 66 -77, self-confidence or assertivity is characterizing a person.

Discussion

In the process of repeated testing, which was carried out a month after the first test was carried out, it was stated that the coefficients of the relationships between the first and second results of the Test were 0.98 according to the Pearson criterion. Thus, a high degree of reliability of the test was proved. We did not check the validity of the test, since this procedure had already been performed by the author of the questionnaire.

The Test of Sheinov on confidence has been used by the authors in several studies. Thus, in one of these studies, it was discovered that dependence on social networks hinders the development of assertive behavior skills (Makarevičs & Iliško 2022a, 2022b).

Conclusions

The assertive behavior is one of the most studied contemporary problems. Along with theoretical developments, there is a need for tools to investigate and diagnose this phenomenon.

The authors have translated the Test into the Latvian language and adapted assertiveness test. In the process of adaptation, the high reliability of the Latvian version of test was confirmed.

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