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**PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AND STUDENT’S
PARTICIPATORY BEHAVIOR IN STUDENT
ORGANIZATION**

Abstract

This text is based on the analysis of the data obtained from the wider research about the student’s participation in Student organization. During May, 2017 the field research among students at University of “Ss Cyril and Methodius” (UKIM) in Skopje was conducted. The total number of respondents was 669. Respondents were students from 1 till 5 year from almost all faculties which constitute UKIM. For the purpose of this research, two scales (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) from the short version of IPIP NEO, (Five Factorial personality test) and Questionnaire were used. Agreeableness (A) personality dimension is a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic toward others, and dimension Conscientiousness (C), is a tendency to be self-disciplined, to act dutifully. Both dimensions are relevant in institutionalized forms of participation (as

student organization is). Questionnaire contains set of questions which were indicators for student's participatory behavior. In this research participatory behavior has been defined as involvement and influence that students have in decision- making processes in student organization.

The overall findings of this research pointed out that independent variables - personality dimensions (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) cannot predict student's participatory behavior in their student organization.

Keywords: personality dimensions, agreeableness, conscientiousness, participatory behavior, student organization

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this paper is to explore the interconnection between personality dimensions (Agreeableness and Consciousness) and student's participatory behavior in student organization. The participatory behavior in this paper has been defined with concepts like 'involvement' and 'influence' (Cheel 1985) and It is closely connected with the influence that students have in the decision-making process in their student organization. The participation of students in the decision-making processes on issues of their interest is present in almost all modern countries, and the reason for students' organizing is of diverse nature: from improvement of the curricula, cost of studies, ways of organizing higher education through the adoption of the law on higher education, to social initiatives that go beyond student life. Participatory behavior within organized and formally organized groups is a segment of political behavior. Participation in decision-making processes at all levels represents the essence of participatory political culture.

Taking in consideration that this research refers to student population, it is relevant to present some specific aspects of this group. This cohort of students belong to the millennial generation (aged mainly 18 to 25), a generation that from its birth to the present day has been a witness to a series of social events that generate a sense of insecurity and unsafely. When all the events that took place in the period of growth and development of this generation are put together, it can be concluded that they refer to living in a society that is continuously at high risk from a security, economic and social aspect. In the "Study on Young People in the Republic of Macedonia" (Latkovikj et al 2016), the following events were noted as socially negative: the 2001 armed ethnic conflict in the country, the natural disasters in the country, and the wars of the former Yugoslavia. The survey on the expectations of the young people in the Republic of Macedonia, carried out in 2006 (Taleski et al 2006) aims to give an overview of the perceptions of young people regarding the vital socio-economic, internal and external political issues, as well as issues in the spheres of education, migration, human rights. The general perception of the situation in the state, as well as the perception of the internal political situation, clearly demonstrates the state of lethargy among the youth, accompanied by mistrust towards the state institutions. These data are also confirmed in the more recent surveys conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research (Cvetanova et al 2016 "Student Population Identities in the Republic of Macedonia"; Topuzovska-Latkovikj et al 2016, "Study on Young People in the Republic of Macedonia" - both studies were carried out in 2014). Surveys had shown that young people are usually not socially active, and those young people who are, are members of political parties,

a lesser number are members of non-governmental and sports organizations and the smallest number are members of professional organizations. The percentages of students who answered that are politically active have cited pragmatic reasons: employment, a better standard, protection, etc. Regarding political ideology, socialist ideology is still dominant (characterized by collective responsibility, equal distribution of funds, non-conformism and expectation for the responsibility to be taken over by Government institutions) (Markovikj 2010).

FIVE-FACTOR PERSONALITY MODEL/THE BIG FIVE AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

The Five-factor personality model (the Big Five) distinguishes itself from the rest because it is not based on any personality theory, but is based on language analysis, the natural system in which people communicate in order to understand one another (McCrae, Costa 1992). The Five-factor model assumes the existence of five basic dimensions that are in the basis of the personality traits, and are obtained by analysing the language, that is, the attributes used in everyday speech for naming personality traits, as well as data obtained through the application of psychological measuring instruments. The model starts from the concept of hierarchical structure of personality traits. The basic five factors are named as domains and behavioural dimensions that can be grouped in different ways.

- Neuroticism is the dimension that distinguishes the adaptability and emotional stability from inadequacy and emotional instability;
- Extraversion refers to social relations, to social life;
- Openness is third dimension referring to aesthetic sensitivity, intellectual curiosity, intrceptiveness, need for change, independent thinking, preferences of diversity, i.e. inclination to non-dogmatic attitudes;
- Agreeableness is a dimension of interpersonal relations. It involves trust, compassion, the need to help others versus cynicism, selfishness and antagonism. The narrower aspects are trust, sincerity, altruism, modesty;
- Conscientiousness is the ability of self-control as disciplined direction for the realization of set goals, as well as adherence to one's own principles. It manifests itself through the processes of planning, organization, execution of duties and obligations.

Mondak and Halperin (2008) point out that the changes in the research approaches in the domain of political science occur owing to the research in the field of personality psychology where factorial personality models appear. Of

these, the five-factor model is best known. The series of research in the field of political science has resulted in data indicating that all five personality dimensions (according to the five-factor model) have a certain connection with certain aspects of political behaviour. The relationship between personality and political behaviour, according to the authors, should be considered in two aspects. The first aspect is that differences in personality can directly affect different forms of political behaviour, for example: manner of voting, political attitudes, strength of identification with certain political parties, etc. The second aspect is that differences in personality can lead to indirect, situational effects on political behaviour.

Data from the surveys in the domain of political behaviour where the connection between personality dimensions and political variables have been explored, showed that the basic political predispositions are deeply rooted in the personality. The data has shown that personality dimensions are related to important political predispositions and attitudes. These dimensions/traits are not considered to be under our conscious control, but have been found to have a significant effect on thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. In the realm of politics they have been shown to influence one's political participation, sense of civic duty, partisanship, ideology, and political efficacy (Dusso 2016).

It has been demonstrated that Openness is negatively linked to identification with conservatism as an ideology, and a positive connection has been made between the indicated ideology and the personality dimension – Consciousness (Gerber et al 2009). Openness and Extraversion are positive linked to direct democracy e.g. to political protests (Brandstatter and Opp 2014, Gallego and Oberski 2012; Ha et al 2013, Mondiak et al 2010). Other research pointed that Extroversion and Openness are conditioning factors of political activism (Ribeiro, Borba 2016). It has been shown that the dimension Neuroticism (emotional stability) influences the attitude towards political rights. Namely, the persons who are calm and secure are advocates of the politics of equality (Mondiak et al 2010).

Persons with high expressiveness of the Consciousness dimension have a sense of obligation to be good citizens and thus to participate in society (Verhulst, Eaves, Hatemi 2012), and also to stand behind traditional values (Geber et al 2009). Conscientiousness is the personality dimension that includes disposition to be safe, organized and accurate, as well as to work hard and be diligent. People with a high level of conscientiousness usually excel in school and at the workplace. Conscientiousness citizens are known to participate in politics if they perceive it as their civic duty (Monidak 2010). Agreeableness has proven to be positively related to interpersonal trust and trust in politics. Agreeable persons are known to be conflict avoidant and they will avoid political situations that are conflictive (Ackerman 2016). Agreeableness has proven to be positively related to interpersonal trust and trust in politics.

These are findings which support the hypothesis that Big Five have influence on political attitudes and behavior but there are other researchers (Hatemi, Verhulst 2015) who suggests the relationship between personality dimensions and political orientations are either not significant or weak. They declare that the covariance between personality and political preferences is not causal, but due to a common, latent genetic factor that mutually influences both.

RESEARCH

General hypothesis:

Personality dimensions (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) can predict participatory behaviour of students at UKIM in their student organization (SPUKIM).

Sample

Institute for sociological, political and juridical research (ISPJR) - Skopje in May 2017 conducted research on 669 students from State University Ss. Cyril and Methodius (UKIM). The research was conducted with quota sample as a first step and convenience sampling in second. Male students were 33,2% and female 61,8%. Respondents were students from 1 till 5 year from almost all faculties which constitute UKIM.

Instruments

-Short form of Five-factorial personality test IPIP NEO (Goldberg, 1992).

For the purpose of this research, two scales were used that measure two personality dimensions: Conscientiousness and Agreeableness from the version of IPIP NEO personality test containing 50 items, which represents a brief measure of the Big Five Personality Dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness). In this form of the test, each dimension is defined with 10 items. This test uses the “Big Five Factor markers” contained in the International Personality Item Pool, developed and constructed by Goldberg (1992). This test is taken from the “Possible Questionnaire Format for Administering the 50-Item Set of IPIP Big-Five Factor Markers” (International Personality Item Pool. <http://ipip.ori.org/New_IPIP-50-item-scale.htm>). The test contains 50 items ranked on a five-step scale where “1” is “very inaccurate”, “3” is neutral “neither true nor false” and “5” is “very inaccurate”.

The items were translated into Macedonian and the basic metrical features of the two scales were checked (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness).

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicating the internal reliability of scales for the scale measuring the Agreeableness dimension is 0.79, and for the Conscientiousness scale it is 0.82. These coefficients indicate high reliability on both scales. It can be said that two scales have solid metric characteristics that allows their use in further research.

The minimum score that can be obtained on the Conscientiousness scale and the Agreeableness scale is 10, and the maximum is 50. The minimum obtained score on the Agreeableness scale is 16 and the maximum is 50. On the Conscientiousness scale the minimum score is 19 and the maximum is 50. The arithmetic mean for the Agreeableness scale is 38.07, and on the Conscientiousness scale it is 37.6. Both arithmetic means are above the 50th percentile, which would indicate above average expression of both dimensions in the sample respondents.

-Questionnaire designed for the purpose of the research to examine the student's attitude toward their organization (SPUKIM)

Participatory behaviour of the students in student organization has been identified through few questions from the Questioner which are indicators for students' participative behavior in student organization:

- a) Involvement in activities organized by student organization ("Have you ever been involved in some of the activities organized by SPUKIM?") and participation in the work of student organization bodies ("Have you participated in the work of any of the bodies of SPUKIM?");
- b) Voting for representatives in student organization ("Did you voted for the representatives in student organization at the faculty?"; "Did you voted for the president in student organization at the faculty?"; "Did you woted for the president of student organization at the University?")

Results

Before any further elaboration of the main general hypothesis it is relevant to highlighted very low level of knowledge and almost absence of student's participation in student organization (SPUKIM). The percentage of positive answers on the first question in the Questionnaire: "How much are you familiar with the work of SPUKIM" is very low and it is 11,3%. Only 10% of respondents give response that they have been involved in some activities organized by student organization, and only 0,8% are actively involved in the working activities of some

SPUKIM bodies. The percentage of respondents who give their vote for student's representatives is very low: 9% voted for representatives in student organization on the faculty level, 6,8% for president of student organization on faculty level, and 6.1% for president of the student organization on the level of University.

From a statistical domain, a situation where largest number of respondents are grouping in one category makes problematic analyse of the interconnection between variables (personality dimensions and student's participatory behaviour). To explore prediction of personality dimensions on participative behaviour, Binary logistic statistic was applied. Dependent variables (categorical one, with categories: "yes" or "no") are answers on the questions which are indicators for student's participatory behaviour and independent variables are scores on the two scales from the Five-factorial personality test IPIP NEO (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness). No statistically significance difference was found between variables, so it can be said that both personality dimensions cannot be assumed as predictor variables for student's participatory behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Data obtained from applied binary regression statistic indicate that personality dimensions: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness cannot be assumed as predictor variables for student's participatory behavior. So, the general conclusion from this research points to the weak connection between the personality dimensions "Conscientiousness" and "Agreeableness" and the students' participatory behaviour in their student organization (SPUKIM). In a further in-depth study, it might be possible to continue exploration of the relationship between the other three personality dimensions: Openness, Neuroticism, Extroversion and the student's participative behaviour in student organization (SPUKIM).

This conclusion should be considered with caution. The absence of interconnection of variables maybe is a consequence of the absence of student's participatory behavior in student organization (SPUKIM). Weak expression of knowledge and low level of participation speaks about the apathy of students to organize them-selves in a formal student organization – SPUKIM, which in its Statute is defined as an association of citizens that has an autonomous character and whose main goal is advocacy and promotion of students' rights at all levels: local, central and international level³. It this case it is obviously that this particular student organization (SPUKIM) do not provide clime for their member to practice participative behavior through involvement and influence in the decision making

³ http://www.gf.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=54

processes. Since participatory behavior is part of a participatory political culture and primarily depends on the importance of the social role, then the student organization should invest in the processes of integrating its own members, making the role of a student important and significant to them.

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