

INTERPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MANAGERS – SELF-OTHER AGREEMENT

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Abstract: *The paper presents the results of a research aimed at agreement rate between self – evaluation and judgment by others regarding the interpersonal characteristics of managers. The rate of agreement among the judges of a different level of expertise regarding their work with managers was studied. Evaluation of interpersonal characteristics within Wiggins’s theory was conducted by three evaluators in the group of 156 managers, participants of a short – term training focused on effective stress coping. Three evaluators differed in the rate of agreement of interpersonal characteristics. Lower agreement was most likely influenced by the nature of the situation in which the judges and managers knew each – other, by the short duration of the training, as well as by selective expression of judged characteristics in the training context.*

Keywords: *interpersonal characteristics, self-other agreement, managers*

Introduction

Judgment of other people’s traits is a part of human functioning in every interpersonal contact. Perception of others is usually done on the level we are sometimes aware of, but sometimes not. Since it is a natural manifestation when contacting other people, mutual judgment can be observed also in education not just at schools, but also when educating adults, including managers. As many researches indicate, judgment and self-evaluation of personality traits in people is not identical, but quite frequently it reveals discrepancies. Differences in perception are caused by some moderators; their current review can be found in Hřebíčková (2003). These are the four moderators that can influence the self-other agreement according to Funder (in Hřebíčková, 2003): judge, target – person judged, judged trait and information. In this study we investigate the self-other agreement. Specifically, three facilitators whose expertise experience with Rogers PCA (Person Centered Approach) application to work relationships was of a different level. We examined whether there is an agreement between self-evaluated and judged by others interpersonal characteristics. The research situation is described with regard to the four moderators mentioned above. Judged people were managers working in the Centres of Labour. Judged traits were interpersonal characteristics. We have chosen the Wiggins’s theory which was inspired by Leary’s theory of interpersonal behavior. It describes the

model of eight interpersonal characteristics (assured-dominant, arrogant – calculating, cold-hearted, aloof-introverted, unassured-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, warm-agreeable, gregarious-extraverted) which create the circle with two independent factors (dominance and nurturance).

The fourth moderator of self-other agreement is information (Hřebíčková, 2003), which relates to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the relationship between the judges. As for the period for which the judges have known the managers, it was a short – term period. The quality of the relationship was associated with the nature of the training. The main focus of the training was oriented on everyday situations which were classified by managers as stressful. Previous researches in the area of agreement between self-evaluation and judgment by others indicate different level of agreement in various situations. Blackman and Funder (1998) found out, that agreement between self-evaluation and judgment by others increases when the time of observation is prolonged and this finding is valid for the most visible personal traits. The duration of mutual contact between the facilitators/lecturers and the managers should accordingly result in not identical evaluation and self – evaluation, but on the other hand the nature of the contact – opportunity to demonstrate the ways of stressful situations solving – could cause higher agreement between judgment and self-evaluation. Also in trait evaluation – due to having enough time and opportunities to express themselves in training situations – the judges and participants should achieve higher degree of agreement.

The degree of agreement between the judges and participants increases when participants know each other in non-structured situation, which offers more possibilities to express one's behavior freely (Letzring, Wells, Funder, 2006). Since theoretical background of the training was Rogers' person centered approach (more about its application for work with managers see Sollárová, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, Sollárová, Gallová, 2010, Sollárová, Sollár, 2007a, 2007b), which is traditionally described as non-structured, with having more opportunities for natural expression of participants tendencies, higher degree of agreement can be expected. In accordance with this direction we could mention supportive findings of Andersen (1984), that conversation of people about feelings and thoughts resulted in higher agreement between self-evaluation and judgment by others than conversation about hobbies and activities (Letzring, Wells, Funder, 2006). The focus of the training was mainly on feelings and thoughts in real stressful situations of managers.

On the other hand, previous findings indicate, that when evaluating managers by lecturers, it can come to a disagreement. Kenny (2002) found out, that there is a higher agreement with those people, who are closer to us, even though he claims that it is not clear, why this is so. Hřebíčková (2003) found relatively high degree of agreement between relatives when evaluating personal traits. Participants perceived themselves as more extroverted and calm than they were perceived by others, while the gender did not have any impact on evaluation of personal dimensions (Farah, Atoum, 2002). Differences in perception skills were found by Sollárová and Gallová (2010). McCrae and Costa (in Hřebíčková, 2003) summed up the results of ten studies examining the agreement in evaluation of personal traits with mean correlation of 0.45.

We assume that agreement rate will differ not just among the three judges, but the differences shall be found also with regard to particular evaluated interpersonal characteristic.

Methods

Sample

Evaluation of interpersonal characteristics was conducted by three judges in the group of 156 managers, participants of a short-term trainings (altogether 48 hours in 6 days, 11 groups), aimed at searching effective ways of coping with stressful situations. Three lecturers differed in age, gender and amount of experience with Rogers's Person Centered Approach for work relationships. The first lecturer had less training experience with managers, with less number of PCA training hours in comparison with the next two, second lecturer (lecturer 2) had more training experience with managers and completed psychotherapeutic training, the third lecturer (lecturer 3) had the most training experience with managers.

Method

We used the Slovak version of Wiggins's Scale IAS-R (Interpersonal Adjective Scale) with 64 pairs of adjectives creating altogether 8 factors. Both versions (for judgment by others and self-evaluation of interpersonal characteristics) were scored on 8 point Likert scale. In our research we used 8 scales: PA (assured, dominant), BC (arrogant, calculating), DE (cold-hearted), FG (aloof, introverted), HI (unassured, submissive), JK (unassuming, ingenuous), LM (warm, agreeable), NO (gregarious, extraverted).

Research plan

Evaluation was conducted at the end of the training – altogether 48 hours. Three lecturers judged the managers – participants using Wiggins Scale IAS-R. In the course of the second three – day session the managers were asked to fill in the IAS-R, the instruction was to evaluate their own interpersonal characteristics. The comparison was the “self-other agreement”. Each lecturer judged different managers (n = 44, 57, 55).

Procedure

In assessment of methodological aspects, Hřebíčková (2003) describes two possible ways of agreement computation: comparison of means and correlation. Means comparison describes to which degree the judging and evaluating is on average similar. High correlation describes that higher self-evaluation of characteristic will be also judged by others as higher.

To assess differences we used t-test for two dependent samples and Pearson correlation coefficient. The results were computed for all lecturers altogether since every lecturer judged different group of managers. Subsequently we examined the agreement for lecturers separately. The same procedure was used when we examined the relationship between self-evaluation and judgment; in this case the indicator was correlation.

Results

The agreement between judgment and self – evaluation of managers was examined by comparison of means. The results are presented in tables. In the first table there are the values without any identification of the lecturer, the second table present the differences among three judges separately. The assessed variables were 8 scales of IAS-R.

Table 1. Self-other agreement of interpersonal characteristics by three lecturers together and managers (n=156)

Variable	Self-evaluation		Judgment by lecturers		t	p
	M1	SD1	M2	SD2		
PA	43.71	7.14	39.48	9.60	5.089	<.001
BC	16.57	6.75	17.44	7.86	1.227	.221
DE	15.03	6.82	15.94	7.72	1.178	.240
FG	24.83	7.21	22.92	7.50	2.558	.011
HI	23.01	8.56	23.09	10.25	0.076	.939
JK	44.31	6.77	37.28	6.62	9.454	<.001
LM	48.61	7.67	37.46	10.07	10.377	<.001
NO	44.02	8.73	31.35	11.37	12.401	<.001

Legend: variables are described in the section Method

When evaluating self-evaluation and judgment by others regarding interpersonal characteristics of managers we found statistically significant differences in 5 out of 8 variables. In all cases, each interpersonal characteristic was perceived more intensively by the managers. In comparison with judgment of the lecturers, the managers perceived themselves as more assured, dominant (PA), introverted (FG), unassuming (JK), warm-agreeable (LM) and finally more gregarious (NO). The differences were more noticeable in the last three characteristics. Further the results of differences among the three lecturers are presented.

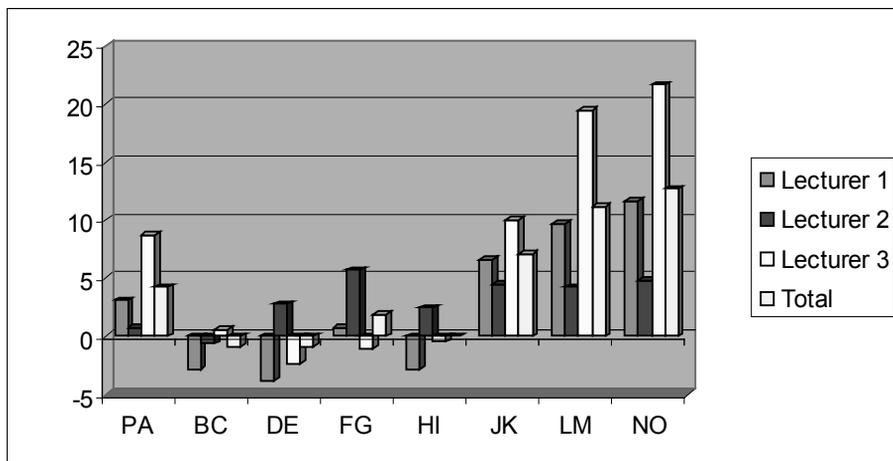
Table 2. Self-other agreement of interpersonal characteristics by three lecturers separately and managers (n=156)

Variable	Lecturer 1 (n=44)		Lecturer 2 (n=57)		Lecturer 3 (n=55)		t1	t2	t3
	Mself	Mother	Mself	Mother	Mself	Mother			
PA	43.49	40.41	44.48	43.74	43.11	34.35	2.395*	0.565	6.055***
BC	16.06	18.95	17.63	18.28	15.89	15.38	2.199*	0.626	0.380
DE	13.77	17.59	16.09	13.33	14.96	17.35	3.540**	2.507*	1.538
FG	24.57	23.84	25.05	19.35	24.81	25.89	0.500	5.357***	0.882
HI	22.34	25.14	23.05	20.61	23.53	24.03	1.633	1.740	0.272
JK	44.12	37.55	43.53	39.05	45.27	35.24	5.095***	4.190***	7.249***
LM	47.14	37.43	48.18	43.95	50.25	30.77	5.158***	3.175**	11.245***
NO	42.43	30.75	44.87	40.07	44.43	22.81	7.274***	3.831***	13.722***

Legend: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001; variables are described in the section Method

We examined whether the differences among the lecturers are significant or not, when judging the same variables. In three characteristics, similar differences were found in all three lecturers (unassuming – JK; warm-agreeable – LM; gregarious – NO). When judging submissiveness (HI) no differences were found in either lecturer. When judging other characteristics, the differences occurred in one, or two lecturers. One lecturer judged differently introverted characteristics (lecturer 2, FG); calculating characteristic (lecturer 1, BC). The managers evaluated themselves as more assured (PA). In the characteristic “cold-hearted” we revealed the significant differences in the opposite direction (lecturer 1 perceived the managers as more cold-hearted, while lecturer 2 perceived

them as less – cold-hearted in comparison with their own perception). The differences are presented in the chart, which points out that the most significant differences were found in the following characteristics: PA, JK, LM and NO.



Graph 1. Mean differences in self-other agreement of interpersonal characteristics.

In the next analysis we tried to examine, whether the differences, except from the level expressed by the mean value, can be found also in the correlations. The first aspect in judgment refers to the relationship – whether it is positive or negative, the second aspect refers to the combination of a relationship and the level of judgment.

Table 3. Correlation of self-evaluation and judgment of interpersonal characteristics by others

	Total	Lecturer1	Lecturer2	Lecturer3
N	156	44	57	55
PA	0,260**	0,307*	0,130	0,310*
BC	0,267***	0,217	0,428***	0,138
DE	0,124	0,328*	0,314*	-0,045
FG	0,197*	0,136	0,303*	0,241
HI	0,194*	0,117	0,186	0,255
JK	0,039	0,058	0,040	0,093
LM	-0,127	-0,032	-0,086	-0,111
NO	0,215**	0,385**	0,288*	0,119

Legend: * p<,05 ** p<,01 *** p<,001; variables are described in the section Method

Ideal agreement of self-evaluation and judgment by others could be reached just in the case of high positive correlations along with non-significant differences. According to the findings of McCrae and Costa, who assert that when judging and self-evaluating of personal traits the mean correlation is .45, we consider the correlations that are close to this value as confirming the standard level of self-other agreement. Except from one pair of judges (Lecturer 3 in judging the characteristics cold-hearted, DE) and all judges in the characteristic warm (LM), all correlations were positive. All negative correlations were not statistically significant.

Just one correlation (Lecturer 2 – BC) reached the value that was higher than 4. The variables, in which the significant differences were found in the level of judgment (PA, FG, JK, LM, NO), the disagreement refers to the correlation in the characteristics JK and LM (unassuming and warm-agreeable). The level of judged interpersonal characteristic can account for the disagreement in the characteristics PA, FG and NO (dominant, introverted, gregarious). Not significant correlations (except from the differences in the mean values) indicate that besides the different judgment of a level related to the characteristic, we should take into account also different judgment of a characteristic in general.

Conclusion: Three judges differed in the level of achieved agreement regarding the interpersonal characteristics judgment. As it can be seen in the graph (Graph1), in some characteristics the judges achieved higher degree of agreement. When the relationships were examined, rather weak relationships (the mean correlation $r=0,177$) were discovered. The judges differed in the level of agreement with the target people-judged and in the characteristics in which the agreement was achieved.

Discussion

People interaction is the source of many ongoing processes. The level of agreement between the self-evaluation of interpersonal characteristics and judgment of these characteristics by three lecturers in the group of managers was most likely influenced by some of the following factors. From the aspects of moderators, which were introduced by Funder (in Hřebíčková, 2003), the first one to mention is the judge. We found the differences among the judges; they came to a different degree of agreement or disagreement in various characteristics. It is not possible to compare the agreement directly in these three judges, since they did not judge the same groups of managers even though the groups did not significantly differ in any characteristic when evaluating themselves. Therefore we can only suggest that it really matters who the judge is. From the aspect of expertise we suppose that having more training experience does not automatically mean higher degree of agreement when judging interpersonal characteristics of other people. Expertise is obviously displayed in the training effectiveness, but not automatically in the agreement between self-evaluation and judgment by others. The third factor – judged trait – probably plays more important part in the agreement. Interpersonal characteristics which revealed higher degree of agreement belong to those more visible and they were freely demonstrated by the participants in non-structured situations within the training aimed at solving stressful situations. In the above mentioned situations higher level of agreement is documented (Andersen, 1984; Letzring, Wells, Funder, 2006). Especially in these characteristics the agreement can be positively influenced by the accurate perception of other people, since the trainings focused on solving interpersonal situations enable the participants to express themselves quite freely. On the other hand the lower agreement in the remaining characteristics can be explained by the fact, that there were not enough opportunities to express the entire range of interpersonal characteristics of participants, for instance those, which were not stressful (protectiveness, affiliation).

The lower degree of agreement could be influenced by the short time of observation (Blackman, Funder, 1998) and by the fact, that judges and target-people judged were not in close relationships or relatives (Kenny, 2002; Hřebíčková, 2003).

Relatively lower level of agreement can indicate the advantage of having an open attitude towards other people, because we probably differ in self-perception of personal traits in ourselves and perception of personal traits in other people. Evaluation or judgment of another person is more important for our own decision making (how to sell a product to a particular customer) in some situations it makes the contact with another person more difficult. Rogers' view on a person (also in education) provides the alternative approach in contact with other people. When being with the other person according to Rogers' core conditions (being congruent, empathic and unconditionally positive regarding) one can express more fully "who he/she really is" (look for more in Rogers, 1998; Sollárová, 2005). We consider positive consequences of this approach to human interaction and to other people as humanistic and healthy.

Conclusion

The level of agreement between self-evaluation and judgment by others regarding the interpersonal characteristics in managers was lower; on the other hand it is comprehensible that most cited researches were carried out on the sample of rather close people or relatives. In our case the managers and the lecturers at the beginning did not know one – another.

However, the disagreement in self-evaluating/judging interpersonal characteristics of managers did not have any negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the particular training (confirmed by the research of Sollárová, Gallová, 2010). We consider as highly important to explore what is happening when people judge and when people do not judge the others in interpersonal contact. What is more important is whether confrontation of different ideas or views shall result in improving closeness or it will make the people to go away from each other.

ZHODA MEDZI SEBAPOSÚDENÍM A POSÚDENÍM INTERPERSONÁLNYCH CHARAKTERISTÍK MANAŽÉROV

Abstrakt: Príspevok prezentuje výsledky výskumu, ktorého cieľom bolo skúmať mieru zhody posúdenia a sebauposúdenia interpersonalných charakteristík manažérov. Sledovali sme mieru zhody medzi posudzovateľmi rôznej úrovne expertnosti práce s manažermi pri posúdení a sebauposúdení interpersonalných charakteristík manažérov.

Hodnotenie interpersonalných charakteristík Wigginsovej koncepcie sme realizovali pomocou troch hodnotiteľov u 156 manažérov, účastníkov krátkodobých výcvikov zameraných na efektívne riešenie záťažových situácií. Traja posudzovatelia sa líšili v miere dosahovanej zhody hodnotenia interpersonalných charakteristík. Nižšia zhoda bola pravdepodobne ovplyvňovaná charakterom situácie, v ktorej sa hodnotitelia a posudzované osoby poznali, krátkym časom trvania výcviku, ako aj selektívnym prejavovým hodnotených charakteristík v kontexte výcviku.

Kľúčové slová: interpersonalné charakteristiky, zhoda posudzovateľov (self-other agreement, manažéri