

SELF-CONCEPT AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THREE NATIONAL CULTURES

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Abstract: Among the various studies on cross-cultural aspects of self-concept there is a huge lack on relation of self-concept to competition. In our study, we try to reject a stereotype, that competition is not a desired personal characteristic. The principal hypothesis is, therefore, that if competition is investigated in a context of self-concept, positive dimensions as well as correlations with self-concept areas can appear. As a consequence, a new model of self-concept, based on different kinds of competition, could be postulated. It could also be assumed that this model might differ from culture to culture. There were, accordingly, participants from three countries taking part in the study. Countries were chosen on the basis of political and cultural indicators in Eastern/Southern versus Western/Southern European transitions: Slovenia, Serbia and Spain. There are two particular aims to the research. The first one is to find out if there are any differences in self-concept and competition among participants from different countries. In accordance with the second aim, the investigation of the correlations between self-concept and competition within each national cultural group is underlined. The study comprised 169 Slovene, 99 Serbian and 140 Spanish participants. We found that the cultural indicator has a significant impact on self-concept and competition. What is more, it could be assumed that "Southern" disposition predominates over Eastern as well as Western dimensions, which means that Slovenes could be among the more competitive participants, but have lower self-concept areas than their Southern peers.

Key words: self-concept, competition, school motivation, national-cultural research

INTRODUCTION

Competition is becoming one of the prevailing life practices in modern society, not only for adults but also for growing adolescents. Among the various studies on cross-cultural aspects of self-concept there is a huge lack on relation of self-concept to competitiveness noticeable. However, if we examine competitiveness in the framework of self-concept, we discover not only

its negative but also its positive aspects. We believe that personal development competitiveness is of significant importance for the psychosocial development of an individual, his/her subjective well-being and self-concept. In the relation between competitiveness and self-concept, on the other hand, we presume that competitiveness has a significant effect on the progress of the individual in learning.

SELF-CONCEPT

Self-concept is a term that has been familiar in psychology - under various designations - for a good century. According to

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James (1890) self-concept is defined as everything that a person thinks about him/herself and everything that a person wants to present to others about him/herself. Generally, self-concept is defined by a variety of relationships that an individual, consciously or unconsciously develops about him/herself. The individual enters them gradually, by means of concepts, feelings, evaluations, self-evaluations, typified personal social dispositions and behavior, etc., which have been developed since his/her birth (Keltinas-Järvinen, 1990). With such an organized entity of conceptions, attitudes, abilities, feelings, etc., the individual monitors and directs his/her behavior (Musek, 1992) and connects his/her system of values with the value system of the immediate or wider social surroundings. In other words, self-concept helps form the reality of the individual.

Numerous studies have shown that self-concept is formed along with and in line with the development of personality. This at the same time means that self-concept develops not just as a whole, but gradually through the building-up of various fields, ranging from physical, social, academic and emotional self-concept to self-concept in the field of attitude towards sexuality, and in that of sincerity, creativity, etc. (Kobal, 2000).

The revised hypothesis on the multidimensionality of self-concept, which was originally posed by James (1890) in the 80s, facilitated various studies on the influence of personal development on the multidimensionality of self-concept (Damon, Hart, 1988; Shavelson, Bolus, 1982; Pervin, 1996). The studies clearly show that self-concept changes through the years and becomes more and more layered (Eder, 1990; Harter, 1996; Oppenheimer, Warnars-Kleverlaan, Molenaar,

1990). O'Malley and Bachman (1983) even presume a linear relation between self-concept and age. They are of the opinion that self-concept is least layered in childhood, its fields being only poorly manifested. What follows are two strong increases in the number of fields, the first on the turning point from early to middle adolescence and the second on that from late adolescence into early adulthood. Its structure begins to have fewer fields in old age.

Shavelson and Bolus (1982) developed a model that has "undergone the most rigorous examination in both cross-sectional and longitudinal designs" (Byrne, Shavelson, 1982, pp. 474). Their basic hypothesis was that the structure of self-concept is multidimensional and hierarchical. General self-concept is at the highest and broadest level of the hierarchy. On the next level down it splits into conceptions about one-self in academic and non-academic areas. These areas are further divided into corresponding subdomains; for example, English, History, peers, significant others, and self-concepts. Finally, at the most basic level, the model contains specific evaluations of behavior in defined situations.

In 1984, the Self-Description Questionnaire was based on Shavelson's model, constructed as a psycho-diagnostic device designed to evaluate different areas of self-concept (Marsh, O'Neill, 1984). This instrument, specially designed for assessing adolescents, contains the following self-concept areas: 1) mathematics, 2) verbal, 3) academic, 4) problem solving/creativity, 5) physical abilities/sports, 6) physical appearance, 7) relations with same-sex peers, 8) relations with opposite-sex peers, 9) relations with parents, 10) religion, 11) sincerity/reliability, 12) emotional stability/security, and 13) general self-concept.

Therefore, self-concept could be defined as "... an organized whole of traits, opinions, attitudes, notions, beliefs and other mental contents which are characterized by the fact that:

- the individual ascribes them to oneself at different stages of development and in different situations;
- they form a referential frame with which the individual directs and monitors his/her behavior;
- they are tightly connected with the existing value system of the individual and the value system of the narrow and broad environment;
- they are constantly under the influence of defense mechanisms, letting into consciousness only those contents that are acceptable for the self of the individual" (Kobal, 2000, p. 25).

CROSS-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF SELF-CONCEPT

Different Cultures

The central question of whether self-concept varies in different cultures has been advanced by Shweder and Bourne (1984). Based on the studies carried out on Indians in the State of Orissa they have concluded that individuals did not describe their own personality in terms of durable characteristics, but are sure that their personality is being formed and changed through social relations, in which they are being integrated. Their findings, that the participants have assessed their own personality in relation to the social context and not in relation to acquired durable personality characteristics or traits, have widened the framework of research activities in the field of personality and self-concept as a social construct. The idea of self-concept in particular has become a

popular subject of intercultural research. Singelis has stated the reason why research into self-concept has had a central place in intercultural studies: "On the one hand the formation of self-concept is dependent on the social context, and on the other hand self-concept has a powerful influence on the social behavior in many fields of individual's operations (e.g., perception, evaluation, values)" (2000, p. 79).

Widespread research into intercultural aspects of self-concept was especially triggered by an article of Markus and Kitayama (1991), which is today one of the most frequently quoted articles in psychology. Markus and Kitayama claimed that self-concept, as represented by the Shavelson model, is independent and autonomous. This statement may fit the self-concept of individuals from countries where Western culture prevails, but not that of Eastern culture. They have found out that most of the existing research into the topic of self-concept has been carried out in the West, in the USA to be more precise, where society mostly encourages independent self-concept and consequently also values such as independence and competitiveness, especially valuable in a man. The primary purpose of the authors was to improve and spread "the Western way of thinking" about the idea of self-concept. They focused especially on examining relations of self-concept to the individual and relevant others, as well as to the social context. Triandis (1990) calls our attention in one of his articles to the fact that the majority of psychological findings are derived from Western, individualistic culture, however approximately 70% of today's population lives within the so-called Eastern culture.

Markus and Kitayama (1991), as well as Triandis (1989), have differentiated the individualistic Western culture, which

highly values autonomy, from the collectivistic Eastern culture, which emphasizes family values, dependence and teamwork. These values influence the development of self-concept: "Western self-concept" is more individualistic, independent, whereas "Eastern self-concept" is collectivistic and dependent. The trend of research by Fleming and Watkins (2001), which was initiated by the works of Markus and Kitayama (1991) as well as Triandis (1989), is collectively designated as the theory of independent and dependent self-concept. This theory was first developed in the area of intercultural research and later spread to other areas, so that, apart from examining cultural differences in independent and dependent self-concept, researchers also studied differences based on gender, age, generation, etc.

Different Nations

In 1990 Strassburger, Rosen, Miller and Chavez performed an intercultural study in the USA that examined the relation between learning performance and academic self-respect, locus of control and socioeconomic status. 67 Spanish students studying in the USA and 304 American students with 7th to 9th degree of education answered the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire and evaluated statements on the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. The authors discovered that the Spanish students, although exhibiting equal learning performance, on average show a slightly lower degree of self-respect than the American students.

In 2000 Kobal Grum performed an international study on self-concept that included 460 high school students from Slovenia, Great Britain and France. She has measured their self-concept by means

of the Questionnaire on Self-Concept for Adolescents SDQ III (Marsh, O'Neill, 1984) and discovered quite a few significant differences. The results show that the Slovene participants, compared to their British and French peers, have their fields of self-concept relatively weakly expressed. The self-concept relating to the area of creativity and problem solving is, on the other hand, higher in the Slovene participants, but this is statistically significant only in comparison with the French participants. Mathematical ability, verbal expression, academic self-concept, physical abilities, relations with same-sex peers, relations with opposite-sex peers, religion, sincerity and reliability, emotional stability and safety - all the areas that show statistically significant differences between the groups, are less highly manifested in the Slovene adolescents in comparison with either the French or the British participants.

Also Musek (1994) discovered in a study on personality characteristics that there exist differences in personality between Slovenes and British. Although the British, as the author maintains, are classed amongst the most introverted European nations, Slovenes surpass even them in this regard. Musek draws the conclusion that Slovenes (disregarding gender) are more introverted than the British. "[...] Slovenes therefore can undoubtedly be classified amongst the relatively introverted nations in the group of other Middle European and Scandinavian nations, if we limit ourselves to the European geographical area" (Musek, 1994, p. 66). The research of Musek (1994) as well as that of Kobal Grum (2000) seem to confirm the hypothesis that self-concept can represent a psychological basis for establishing stereotypes on personality traits of an individual or a group (Musek, 1994).

COMPETITIVENESS AS MOTIVATION

Motivation as an Umbrella Term for Competitiveness

Motivation is a phenomenon with no uniform definition, although different authors agree that motivation can well explain causes of behavior (Lamovec, 1986; Pintrich, Schunk, 1996). In the present article the working hypothesis shall be applied which states that motivation is a process that encourages and directs the behavior of an individual to a certain goal. Motivation cannot be observed directly, we can only infer it from an individual's behavior; for example from the effort that is invested in a certain activity, the tasks performed and ultimately from what this individual tells us about his/her motivation. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) believe that the goal and the activity are of significant importance in understanding motivation.

Competitiveness

Competitiveness refers to different psychological characteristics of an individual that are based on or derived from how much a certain type of motive dominates in the individual. From this point of view there exist as many types of competitiveness as there are of these motives. The relevant motives are the following:

- the winning motive that is characterized by a typical wish and struggle of the individual to win and eliminate the other person;
- the motive to be better than the other person;
- the motive to achieve the criterion of excellence;
- the motive to do something better and thus make progress;

- the motive to test one's own capabilities.

The field of competitiveness has been relatively weakly represented in psychology. In the last decade more scientific attention has been paid to this field, but in view of the complexity of competitiveness and its significance for an individual's progress there are still not enough scientific findings available that could define competitiveness more precisely from the psychological perspective. The reasons for this are numerous: among them certainly the variety of areas in which people compete against each other, and their manner of showing competitiveness. Fulop (1999) has found in a study in which 697 Hungarian, Japanese and American students took part that the participants emphasized 15 fields in which people compete against each other and exhibit their competitiveness. These are the following: economy, finance, politics, work, every-day life, social position, international competitions, competitiveness in the fields of education, science, sports, intellectual work, technologies, amusement and fun, military issues and the field of fashion and beauty.

Many authors have tried to define competitiveness in different fields or even find the index or rate of competitiveness of an individual. It has been revealed that competitiveness is a very complex psychological trait that needs to be analyzed in an interdisciplinary way. Smither and Houston (1992) state that competitiveness is frequently a latent characteristic that is manifested in a social situation, in which interactions between people take place for a longer period of time, when an individual becomes motivated to achieve a result better than the others, to beat the opponent or achieve a defined goal.

Deutsch (1949) has defined competitiveness as a social situation in which the com-

petitors have diametrically opposed goals. Stockdale, Galajs and Wohins (1983) emphasize that it is typical for competitiveness or a competitive situation that one section of the competitors, in a desire to achieve their own goals, constantly strive to beat and thus eliminate the others. Griffin-Pierson (1990) states a similar point of view and believes that it is typical of a competitive situation that one section of the participants strive towards a certain goal and others try to hinder them and thus prevent the achievement of the desired goal. According to Riskind and Wilson (1982) competitiveness is basically the pleasure that an individual enjoys in a competitive situation or in mutual competition; enjoying this pleasure is a motive to do something better than others. On the other hand, Smither and Houston (1992) state that the strongest competitive motive is the need for achievement and success.

Helmreich and Spence (1978) define competitiveness as a desire to win that is based on how an individual perceives the social environment. Typical of this situation is the existence of an opponent or a group of competitors, which represent a criterion or standard in a competitive situation. Competitiveness is a multi-dimensional construct, of which two dimensions are characteristic:

- playing, performance, competition against others;
- struggling to carry out a task better than the other person.

For the first dimension mutual competitiveness is characteristic, which is manifested by the wish of the competitor to beat the others. The second dimension is about struggling to reach the defined goals: not only to do something better than the others but to do it as well as you can (Griffin-Pierson, 1990). According to Franken and Brown (1995) the second dimension of

competitiveness has the greatest significance in understanding competitiveness: the author's opinion is that this is a kind of competitiveness through which an individual struggles to achieve the criterion of excellence and is necessarily connected with target and performance motivation, as well as with the progress of the individual.

Helmreich and Spence (1978) have analyzed the structure of competitiveness. For this purpose they have developed a Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire (WOFQ). The scale includes 23 items, and measures the position or relation towards family, career or work. This questionnaire was applied by Smither and Houston (1992), who on this basis created a scale with 20 items. The objective of this research was to check the applicability and reliability of this scale and to form a conceptual definition of competitiveness.

In another study they created a factor analysis of competitiveness and tried to develop the rate of competitiveness (Competitiveness Index - CI), which is based on three factors: emotions, arguments, and the game in sport. They also applied the Sports Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) by the authors Gill and Deeter, 1988. The findings reveal that there are medium-high correlations between the Competitiveness Index and the items on the scale WOFQ (.47), as well as between the Competitiveness Index and the items on the scale SOQ (.61). The authors emphasize that competitiveness is basically a need for achievement and that competitiveness in sports is more connected with general competitiveness. In the opinion of the two authors, the results have also shown a difference in competitiveness in regard to gender. Other studies have also found some gender differences in regard to culture. Schneider et al. (Schneider, Woodburn, Soteras del Toro, Udvari, 2005;

Schneider, Soteras del Toro, Woodburn, Fulop, Cervino, Bernstein, Santor, 2006) suggest that cultural and gender differences in competition already emerge in early adolescence. In their Canadian - Cuban cross-cultural study, girls were less competitive with their friends than were boys, no matter which culture they belonged to. Several dimensions of competition were found between boys, especially in the Canadian sample. Gneezy, Leonard and List (2008) established that women in patriarchal cultures are less competitive than men, while women in matrilineal culture are more competitive than men.

Also of high interest is the Ryckman postulation of competitiveness (Ryckman, Libby, van den Borne, Gold, Lindner, 1997; Ryckman, Thornton, Butler, 1994), in which the author differentiates two types: hyper-competitiveness and personal development competitiveness. Hyper-competitiveness is a motive for which it is typical that the individual tries to achieve a goal irrespective of the means to be used. It aims towards competition and winning, by avoiding failure, of course. In doing this, the individual primarily takes care of him/herself and uses on the way various techniques from manipulation, aggressiveness to exploitation, etc. The author believes that a hyper-competitive individual highly values achievements, hedonism, power, stimulation, and is egocentrically oriented. The individual or group aims at beating or eliminating the other persons and thus feeling superior to them, and usually also competes in situations that are not of a competitive nature, or exhibit competitiveness in relation to those nearest to them, who do not have the role of a co-competitor.

As a personality trait, on the other hand, competitiveness is a motive in which the main emphasis is not on winning, but on

one's own personal development, which is a result of the experience that the individual has gained in competitive situations. The individual is focused on self-development, self-discovery and discovery of his/her potential, and on a constant critical relation to self-improvement. In doing this the individual follows the standards of excellence and the achievement of defined goals and thus wants to make progress and do something as well as (s)he can.

Based on the above-mentioned hypotheses Ryckman designed two scales for measuring hyper-competitiveness and personal development competitiveness (Ryckman et al., 1994; 1997). We have also applied the two scales in the research that is presented in this article.

We have designed a cross-cultural study in order to clarify some unresolved questions concerning the relationship between self-concept and competitiveness. The main purpose of the present study was to examine, on the multicultural level, the connection between competitiveness and self-concept in its general and specific domains. Specifically, we hypothesized that nationality would also influence the various components of self-concept and competitiveness.

The selection of a group of Slovenes, Serbs and Spaniards results from the idea that we have of including the dividing line between Eastern and Western culture on the one hand (Serbia, Spain) and between Northern and Southern culture on the other hand (Slovenia, Serbia and Spain). Slovenia seems to be interesting through comparison with Serbia because of the common past, development and life within the model of the socialist economy. However, there has always been a difference between the two countries. Slovenia had already struggled to achieve a better standard and better competitiveness in foreign

markets, whereas Serbia has shown itself to be more sociable and cooperative compared with Slovenia.... Spain has been included because it represents a Western life model and is at the same time characterized by the stereotyped "Southern" sociability, easiness, relaxedness in social relations.... In the article we are trying to follow the relation between self-concept, competitiveness and motivation in all three nations, since we presume that it should be manifested differently in different cultures.

METHODS

Research Design

A multivariate analysis of variance model (MANOVA) was performed in order to explore differences in variables of self-concept, competitiveness and other school motives as a function of national culture. National culture (Slovene, Serbian, Spanish) was treated as an independent factor, the variables of self-concept, school motivation and competitiveness being dependent. We took in our design of MANOVA the following dependent variables. Variables of self-concept are: mathematics, verbal, academic, problem solving/creativity, physical abilities/sports, physical appearance, relations with same-sex peers, relations with opposite-sex peers, relations with parents, religion, sincerity/reliability, emotional stability/security, and general self-concept. The following variables of school motivation have been taken as well: task, effort, sense of purpose, social power, affiliation, social concern, praise, token, general motivation, mastery general, performance general and social general. Our research design has been completed with two variables of competitiveness: hyper-competitiveness and personal development competitiveness. The whole design of

MANOVA has been taken successively, first taking nationality as an independent variable and, as dependent variables, variables of the self-concept area. The same procedure has been followed for the area of school motivation and competitiveness. In this way the effect size values have been calculated, which show in which area most differences between nations are appearing. These differences were closely investigated through ANOVA analytical procedures.

Subjects

A total of 408 first-year students from Slovenia (N = 169), Serbia (N = 99) and Spain (N = 140) participated in the study. They were selected on the grounds of comparable educational programs and similar age (19 years). We could not compare our population according to gender, because there were 86% female and only 14% male participants.

Research Instruments

Self-concept. The instrument was the Self-Description-Questionnaire III (SDQ III), based upon the Shavelson model of self-concept (Shavelson, Bolus, 1982), and constructed by Marsh and O'Neill (1984). SDQ III is specially designed for adolescents aged 15 and over (Marsh, 1989), and consists of the 13 self-concept areas described above (Marsh, O'Neill, 1984). In addition, the questionnaire includes several academic components of self-concept (mathematical, verbal, and general academic self-concept). Variables of self-concept have been measured on the six point scale, where 136 items represented 13 areas of self-concept.

School motivation. For gathering data in the field of motivation we have applied the

Inventory of School Motivation (ISM) by the authors McInerney et al. (1997), which measures 12 fields of motivation for education: task, effort, sense of purpose, social power, affiliation, social concern, praise, token, general motivation, mastery general, performance general, social general. Variables of school motivation have been measured on the five point scale, where 67 items represented 12 fields of school motivation.

Competitiveness. Two measures of competitiveness by Ryckman et al. were used: "A measure of personal attitudes concerning competitiveness (hyper-competitiveness)" (Ryckman et al.), and "My personal attitudes toward competitiveness (personal development competitiveness)" (Ryckman, Hammer, Kaczor, Gold, 1996). Variables of hyper-competitiveness have been measured on the five point scale, where 26 items represented this field, and variables of personal development competitiveness have been measured on the same scale, where 15 items represented this field.

Additional data. General information (e.g., age, gender, study) was collected by

a supplementary questionnaire. All questionnaires were translated into and administered in the relevant language (i.e., Slovene, Serbian or Spanish).

Procedure and Statistical Treatment of Data

The gathering of data took place at the universities in Slovenia, Serbia and Spain. The participants got and completed a pack of questionnaires. The results were then analyzed with the statistical program SPSS (Hull, Nie, 1984).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

When we take into account the whole design of MANOVA it could be asserted that there are significant differences between three national cultures, which could be seen from effect size values for particular areas. In the first place we took as an independent variable the nationality of

Table 1. Multivariate test results - Self-concept

Multivariate Tests(c)							
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.973	1228.597(a)	13.000	446.000	.000	.973
	Wilks' Lambda	.027	1228.597(a)	13.000	446.000	.000	.973
	Hotelling's Trace	35.811	1228.597(a)	13.000	446.000	.000	.973
	Roy's Largest Root	35.811	1228.597(a)	13.000	446.000	.000	.973
Nation	Pillai's Trace	.378	8.025	26.000	894.000	.000	.189
	Wilks' Lambda	.632	8.831(a)	26.000	892.000	.000	.205
	Hotelling's Trace	.564	9.650	26.000	890.000	.000	.220
	Roy's Largest Root	.531	8.268(b)	13.000	447.000	.000	.347

(a) Exact statistic

(b) The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level

(c) Design: Intercept + nation

participants and as dependent variables the whole area of self-concept (Table 1).

As could be shown from Table 1 the effect size values are in a range where the area of self-concept contributes a lot to the variability and differences among three nations (Pillai's trace = 0.378; Wilks' Lambda = 0.632, Hotelling's Trace =

0.564 and Roy's Largest Root = 0.531). The model is highly significant; $p = 0.000$. In the next pages we see which of the variables of self-concept contribute most to the differences.

The next multivariate test shows as an independent variable nationality of participants and the dependent variables are vari-

Table 2. Multivariate test results - Motivation

Multivariate Tests(c)							
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.988	3033.376(a)	12.000	450.000	.000	.988
	Wilks' Lambda	.012	3033.376(a)	12.000	450.000	.000	.988
	Hotelling's Trace	80.890	3033.376(a)	12.000	450.000	.000	.988
	Roy's Largest Root	80.890	3033.376(a)	12.000	450.000	.000	.988
Nation	Pillai's Trace	.810	25.583	24.000	902.000	.000	.405
	Wilks' Lambda	.282	33.119(a)	24.000	900.000	.000	.469
	Hotelling's Trace	2.220	41.534	24.000	898.000	.000	.526
	Roy's Largest Root	2.062	77.491(b)	12.000	451.000	.000	.673

(a) Exact statistic

(b) The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level

(c) Design: Intercept + Nation

Table 3. Multivariate test results - Competitiveness

Multivariate Tests(c)							
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.965	5966.339(a)	2.000	433.000	.000	.965
	Wilks' Lambda	.035	5966.339(a)	2.000	433.000	.000	.965
	Hotelling's Trace	27.558	5966.339(a)	2.000	433.000	.000	.965
	Roy's Largest Root	27.558	5966.339(a)	2.000	433.000	.000	.965
Nation	Pillai's Trace	.073	8.170	4.000	868.000	.000	.036
	Wilks' Lambda	.928	8.288(a)	4.000	866.000	.000	.037
	Hotelling's Trace	.078	8.405	4.000	864.000	.000	.037
	Roy's Largest Root	.075	16.304(b)	2.000	434.000	.000	.070

(a) Exact statistic

(b) The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level

(c) Design: Intercept + Nation

ables of motivation in schools. It is obvious that these variables contribute to the design even more than the self-concept variables do. The effect size values for this area are as follows: Pillai's trace = 0.810; Wilks' Lambda = 0.282, Hotelling's Trace = 2.220 and Roy's Largest Root = 2.062).

As could be seen from Tables 1 and 2 the effect size values show that variables of self-concept and motivation in schools considerably divide the nations compared. From Table 3 it could be seen that the variable of competitiveness contributes

very little to the whole design of multivariate analysis of variance. It is from differences in motivation and self-concept that most differences among the nations under investigation could be explained.

Self-Concept

The results in Table 4 show the characteristics of self-concept of the students from the total sample, meaning all the students included in the research as well as those from each nation separately.

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, F values and significance of self-concept areas

Nation	Total		Slovenes		Spaniards		Serbs		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Self-concept areas										
Mathematics	34.92	11.748	37.12	11.892	32.01	11.105	34.09	11.397	.529	.067
Verbal self-concept	40.36	10.266	39.10	12.138	42.99	6.697	39.33	9.157	6.884	.001**
Academic self-concept	39.99	9.823	38.17	11.132	44.05	6.173	38.13	9.223	18.899	.000***
Problem solving/creativity	38.41	8.597	38.20	9.882	38.84	5.137	38.23	9.537	.359	.699
Physical abilities/sports	36.97	12.150	35.64	13.037	38.56	10.727	37.75	11.755	2.725	.001**
Physical appearance	37.44	10.189	36.53	11.401	38.55	7.775	37.91	10.273	1.994	.137
Relations with same-sex peers	39.60	10.552	37.25	12.131	43.83	6.181	38.77	9.899	17.477	.000***
Relations with opposite-sex peers	38.18	11.375	36.15	12.308	42.32	9.166	36.71	10.481	14.220	.000***
Relations with parents	39.40	11.459	37.24	12.835	44.43	7.100	36.85	10.993	20.954	.000***
Religion	38.11	13.633	39.29	15.747	35.35	10.660	39.52	11.564	3.780	.024*
Sincerity/reliability	49.47	12.932	46.24	14.396	56.57	5.651	46.31	13.000	34.580	.000***
Emotional stability/safety	36.01	10.379	35.30	11.269	37.63	7.794	35.24	11.409	2.551	.079
General self-concept	47.02	12.484	44.10	13.449	53.78	8.494	43.63	11.163	33.716	.000***

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

The results confirm some of the preliminary findings (Kobal, 2000), that in regard to the self-concept of the students from the total sample two areas are prominent: sincerity, reliability and general self-concept. What follows (considering the arithmetic mean) is: verbal self-concept and academic self-concept, as well as relations with same-sex peers and relations with parents. In the self-concept of the total sample creativity takes place 7 ($M = 38.4$), and then relations with opposite-sex peers ($M = 38.1$). The students have also exhibited a similar result in the field of religion ($M = 38.1$), for which the highest standard deviation is typical. The following fields are less typical for the self-concept of the total sample: physical appearance ($M = 37.4$), physical ability and sports ($M = 36.9$) and emotional stability ($M = 36$). Mathematical abilities are in last place

($M = 34.9$): the students of the total sample do not attribute a significant place to mathematical abilities from the standpoint of self-concept. We believe that this is a result of the student's social studies orientation: we presume that the students have evaluated their own mathematical abilities and that this self-evaluation has contributed to the choice of social or similar studies.

Figure 1 shows that Slovene, Spanish and Serbian participants differ in eight fields of self-concept.

The differences in the following fields are statistically significant: academic self-concept, relations with same-sex peers and opposite-sex peers, relations with parents, and in the field of sincerity, reliability and general self-concept. We have discovered that the groups also show significant differences in the field of mathematical abili-

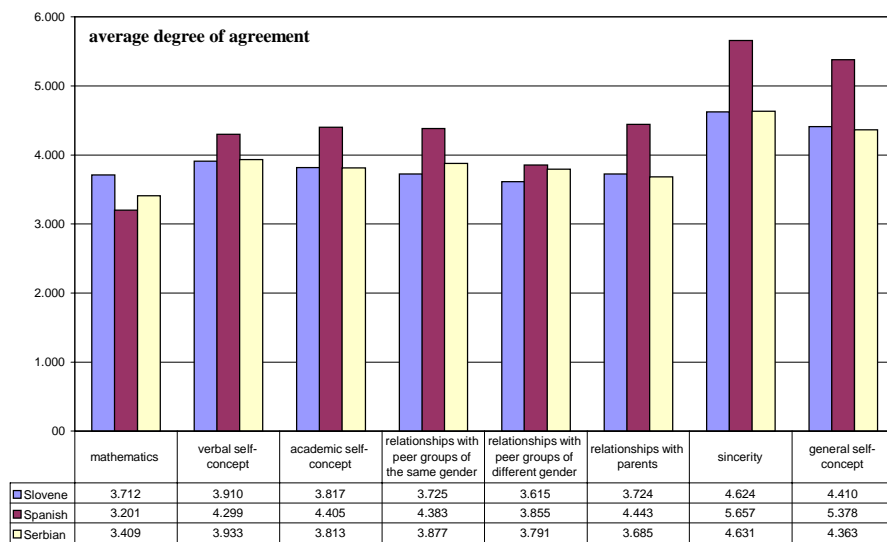


Figure 1. Differences in self-concept between Slovene, Spanish and Serbian students

ties and verbal self-concept to the following rate of significance ($p < 0.001$). We have also found that the group of Slovene students, in comparison with Spanish and Serbian students, has only the self-concept relating to the field of mathematical abilities more highly manifested. The lowest manifestation is exhibited in the fields that refer to verbal expression, physical ability and sports, relations with same-sex peers and opposite-sex peers, and the self-concept referring to sincerity and reliability. In all the cases of statistically significant differences, with the exception of the above-mentioned mathematical abilities that are more highly manifested in the Slovene participants, and in the field of spirituality that is more highly manifested in Serbian participants, the self-concept of the Spanish participants is higher. At the same time, though, among the variables which contribute most to differences between the three nations in the area of self-concept are: academic self-concept, $F = 18.899$, $p = 0.000$, relations with same-sex peers, $F = 17.477$; $p = 0.000$, relations with parents, $F = 20.954$; $p = 0.000$, sincerity/reliability, $F = 34.580$; $p = 0.000$ and general self-concept, $F = 33.716$; $p = 0.000$ (Table 4).

It can be concluded from the results that the stereotype about "Southern" nations characterized by loquacity, sociability, openness, extroverted nations in short, could be confirmed for the Spanish participants in our research. With them, verbal self-concept as well as the fields of social self-concept, sincerity and reliability exhibit the highest manifestation. It may be expected that Serbs fit into this stereotype also, but our sample has not confirmed this. It is also highly likely that the war has resulted in long-term consequences for Serbian adolescents in the area of sociability and social behavior. The Serbs manifest

an emotional stability, safety and general self-concept that is even lower than their manifestation of social self-concept. They seem, on the contrary, to retreat into spirituality and "new age" forms of self-development more, which is also proven by their higher self-concept in the area of religion and spirituality. The isolation and distance from global activities are undoubtedly also reflected on the emotional level and in the form of searching for purpose. At the same time we can confirm the stereotype about Slovenes being a less sociable, introverted nation (Mussek, 1994): verbal self-concept, fields of social self-concept, sincerity and reliability are lowest manifested in the Slovene participants.

School Motivation

Table 5 shows means, standard deviations, F values and significance of school motivation.

As could be detected from previous comparisons between the groups, at the top of the motivation scale for the total sample are: efforts to accomplish tasks, social concern and general progress. Here already we can notice differences between the Spanish students on the one hand and the Slovene and Serbian students on the other hand. The results of the total sample show that it is characteristic of all the participants that they are not greatly motivated by cooperation with others during their studies: on the motivational scale this area was in the background for many nations and it could be expected that the result would be confirmed for the total sample. The next lowest field of motivation was struggling for social power in the course of education ($M = 15.36$), which exhibited the highest standard deviation ($SD = 6.665$). General progress, praise, ability to complete school tasks and general

Table 5. Means, standard deviations, F values and significance of school motivation areas

Nation	Total		Slovenes		Spaniards		Serbs		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
School motivation areas										
Task	17.10	2.160	17.67	2.036	15.60	1.704	18.01	1.902	3.325	.000***
Effort	25.92	4.359	26.19	4.652	25.16	3.550	26.45	4.645	62.086	.046*
Sense of purpose	20.37	5.004	22.52	4.411	16.31	3.488	21.43	4.571	3.094	.000***
Social power	15.36	6.665	12.64	5.71	21.94	3.678	11.82	4.865	174.241	.000***
Affiliation	9.73	2.359	9.62	2.628	10.25	1.957	9.18	2.088	96.393	.004**
Social concern	20.85	2.869	20.20	2.95	21.96	2.404	20.72	2.844	5.678	.000***
Praise	17.05	3.860	17.00	3.95	16.83	2.488	17.51	5.169	17.176	.424
Token	18.53	4.216	17.78	4.298	20.90	2.850	16.7	4.235	.859	.000***
General motivation	29.23	4.942	30.12	4.927	26.61	3.613	31.13	5.167	39.411	.000***
Mastery general	16.09	2.884	17.21	2.458	13.91	2.309	16.72	2.79	33.473	.000***
Performance general	21.27	5.704	21.15	6.278	23.18	4.151	18.63	5.245	77.810	.000***
Social general	17.34	3.679	16.30	3.783	19.25	2.900	16.90	3.376	17.786	.000***

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

social motivation are positioned in the medium part of the motivational scale. A slight deviation is noticeable in the wish to be rewarded for the completed study tasks ($M = 18.53$). What is also interesting is that the motive of acquiring social power is in last place, which, however, is an expected result for a population of adolescents that are still in the process of forming their own self-concept and establishing their place in society.

Figure 2 shows the significant differences in school motivation between Slovene, Spanish and Serbian students.

By means of variance analysis we have established differences between the three nations in the area of school motivation. The participants differ in all the fields of school motivation that have been analyzed.

It has to be added that student populations differs from each other most in accordance with several variables of school motivation, which emerges from our MANOVA analysis. So, the greatest F values could be found on the following variables: social power, $F = 174.241$; $p = 0.000$, sense of purpose, $F = 96.393$; $p = 0.000$; mastery general, $F = 77.810$; $p = 0.000$ and task, $F = 62.086$; $p = 0.000$ (Table 5). Statistically significant differences have also been revealed in the following fields: completing study tasks and obligations, target motivation, efforts to achieve social power, social concern, expected rewards for completed study tasks, general motivation, general progress, getting attention and general social motivation. The smallest differences between the participants have

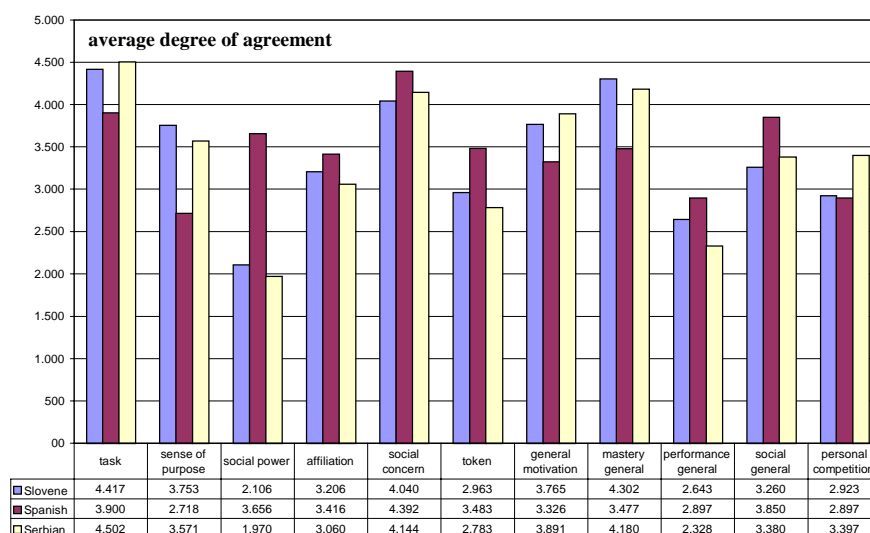


Figure 2. Differences in school motivation and competitiveness between Slovene, Spanish and Serbian students

been established in the field of expecting rewards for the completed task and efforts in studies, which is very important in view of target motivation (McInerney, 2000). Slovene students, in comparison with Serbian and Spanish ones, exhibit a higher degree of target motivation, general motivation and general progress, and the lowest degree of social aspects such as social concern and general social motivation. The aspects mentioned are typical for Spanish students, who on the other hand do not care so much about results, goals, general progress, accomplishment of tasks and praise. It seems possible to confirm on the basis of these results the stereotype according to which the "Latin" nations (to which undoubtedly the Spanish also belong) are more sociable, friendly and extroverted than the Northern nations. In the case of

Slovenes, too, it could be claimed that the results fit the national stereotype, according to which Slovenes belong to the introverted and hard-working nations. It appears that social concern and a general motivation related to others is not so important to Slovenes. This aspect can also be explained through a stereotyped characteristic that says Slovenes are envious of other people. However, it needs to be emphasized that social concern is placed high on the motivational scale in students of all nationalities, which is a result to be expected in a population of adolescents.

Competitiveness

Table 6 shows that the total sample is closer to manifesting hyper-competitiveness.

Table 6. Means, standard deviations, F values and significance of competitiveness areas

Nation	Total		Slovenes		Spaniards		Serbs		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Personal development competitiveness	45.19	12.620	43.85	12.100	43.46	12.469	50.96	12.520	14.056	.000***
Hyper-competitiveness	61.50	13.097	62.59	14.067	60.82	12.069	59.88	12.029	1.255	.286

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

We were interested in whether there are differences in personal competitiveness and hyper-competitiveness between the participants in regard to their nationality. For this purpose a variance analysis has been performed, which detected differences in both fields between the groups, as shown by Figure 2. It has been established that a statistically significant difference exists between the three nations in the field of personal development competitiveness, or competitiveness with positive consequences, for which competing to achieve the defined goals and progress is characteristic, competing to develop one's own abilities, competitiveness that aims at doing something as well as one can and thus following the criteria of excellence.

It could be seen that competitiveness as a personal trait is most highly manifested in Serbian students, whereas hyper-competitiveness, that is, the struggle to achieve the goal by employing all possible means, is most characteristic of the Slovene participants, although the difference is not statistically significant. Personal development competitiveness ($F = 14.056$; $p = 0.000$) contributes more to the general differences among nations than hyper-competitiveness does ($F = 1.255$; $p = 0.286$).

CONCLUSIONS

Let us now examine the psychological profile of the Slovene participants in comparison with their Spanish and Serbian counterparts. In doing this, we will try to follow the below-mentioned items:

- Do the self-concept, motivation and competitiveness of the Slovene participants differ from those of the Spanish and Serbian ones?

- Is the psychological profile of the Slovene participants dependent on the life period that they are in, adolescence that is?

- Is the psychological profile of Slovene participants connected to the social period of transition that Slovenia is currently undergoing, or perhaps with some traditional, deep-rooted images that Slovenes have of themselves?

- Is the psychological profile of Slovene participants influenced by national stereotypes?

We have already seen that the self-concept, motivation and competitiveness of the Slovene participants differ from those of the Spanish and Serbian participants in many ways. On average we can say that their self-concept is highest in the field of mathematical abilities; they wish to be successful in studies so that they can get a good job; more than the others

they have developed a plan how to be as successful as possible in their studies; in general their target motivation and general motivation are more highly manifested; on average they have a greater wish to be promoted in their studies as well as later in work than their Spanish and Serbian counterparts.

Which areas of their psychological profile are lowest manifested in comparison with their Spanish and Serbian counterparts? There are quite a few of these areas: verbal self-concept, self-concept in the field of physical abilities and sports, social self-concept in the field of peer relations, sincerity and reliability. In regard to motivation mutual help amongst students in studying is least important to them, the same goes also for providing help to other students; generally they are not as concerned about their co-students' welfare as are their Spanish and Serbian counterparts. Therefore their social motivation is in general lower.

It is probably true that the lower self-concept of the Slovene participants is on the one hand linked with their period of adolescence, which is nevertheless characterized by an unstable, changeable self-concept, which is less highly manifested than later in adulthood. If this were true, though, we would expect lower values in Serbian and Spanish participants also. Therefore it could be concluded that the result is another consequence of the transition period that Slovenia is currently undergoing. In security in this regard is surely reflected in the thinking and experiences of adolescents also, who will be most affected by changes, whether positive or negative.

Some interesting conclusions could be drawn if we compare the results obtained with main national stereotypes about Slovenians (Musek, 1994):

1) "[...] Slovenes belong to the nations that are on average more introverted.

2) Slovenes belong to the nations that are in general rather productively oriented, diligent and disciplined.

3) Slovenes belong to the nations that are non-aggressive, humble and not very self-confident, [...] we are a nation of 'servants'" (Musek, 1994a, p. 74).

Considering the fact that introvertedness is a personality trait connected with unsociability, we can at least partly confirm the first auto-stereotype: social self-concept and social motivation are amongst the areas least highly manifested in the Slovenes. Our productive orientation, diligence and discipline, as mentioned in the second stereotype, are probably demonstrated through higher motivation, such as target and general motivation, at the cost, however, of interest in others. And regarding the third stereotype that says that Slovenes are a non-aggressive, humble nation lacking in self-confidence, we can say that this is at least partly true. There are quite a few areas of self-concept that are less highly expressed in the Slovene participants. Self-concept is of course closely connected with self-confidence and self-esteem.

The results of our study show that Slovenes belong to the nations that will be able to live freely and successfully in the European Union. However we have established that for Slovenes the most important thing at the present time is to develop a feeling for others. It can be inferred from the results that we Slovenes can only build up and improve our self-confidence and self-concept if we pay attention to other people too, if we also have concern for others and care about mutual relations. And that, too, in every area of our life.

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KONCEPT SELF A SÚŤAŽIVOSŤ V TROCH NÁRODNÝCH KULTÚRACH

D. K o b a l G r u m, J. K o l e n c

Súhrn: V rámci medzikulturálnych štúdií aspektov pojmu self je len málo štúdií zaoberajúcich sa vzťahom medzi pojmom self a súťaživosťou. V našej štúdií sa snažíme vyhnúť stereotypu, že súťaživosť nie je žiaduca ľudská vlastnosť. Ak súťaživosť skúmame v kontexte pojmu self, predpokladáme, že sa môžu objaviť pozitívne dimenzie ako aj korelácie s pojmom self. Z toho možno vyvodíť nový model pojmu self založený na rôznych typoch súťaživosti. Zároveň môžeme predpokladať, že model sa bude v rôznych kultúrach líšiť. Preto sa na výskume podieľali účastníci z troch rôznych krajín. Krajiny sa vybrali na základe politických a kultúrnych ukazovateľov v prechodoch Východ/Juh a Západ/Juh: Slovinsko, Srbsko a Španielsko. Výskum má dva hlavné ciele. Prvým je zisťovanie rozdielov v pojme self a súťaživosti medzi účastníkmi z rôznych krajín. Druhým cieľom je zdôraznenie sledovania vzťahu medzi pojmom self a súťaživosťou v jednotlivých národných skupinách. Výskumu sa zúčastnilo 169 účastníkov zo Slovinska, 99 zo Srbska a 140 zo Španielska. Zistili sme, že kultúra má významný vplyv na pojem self a súťaživosť. Ba čo viac, môžeme predpokladať, že "južanská" predispozícia prevláda nad východnou ako aj nad západnou dimenziou, podľa čoho by Slovinci mali byť súťaživejšími účastníkmi, no s nižšími hodnotami konceptu self než ich južní rovesníci.