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IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY OF CONSTANT INDIVIDUAL TRAITS OF HUMAN PERSONALITY FOR THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Summary

The conception of constant individual traits of human personality that allows isolating constant individual traits that are independent of the influence of the environment and variable traits of personality that depend on the influence of environment, is presented. The traditional system of education in the aspect of the conception is characterized. Educational implication of the conception of constant individual traits that make up a set of postulates addressed to creators of a future system of education, which may contribute to making the system more effective than the traditional one, are presented.

Keywords: system of education, constant individual traits of personality

According to current psychological knowledge about man, a human being as a general subject of this knowledge should be regarded as unsatisfactorily known.

Systemic approach allows integrating and coordinating the otherwise fragmented knowledge about man. According to the systemic knowledge, human behaviour depends on what is happening in their organisms and in their environment.

People exist in their environment in spite of many disturbances threatening their existence. In spite of changes occurring in the environment, human beings maintain their functional balance by counteracting disturbances and counteracting their occurrence. They function in their own interest, they are their own organizers, they tend to maintain and extend their existence to maximum. They also draw information and energy from the environment, process and store it, as

well as influence their environment. Thus, one can say that people possess an ability to steer themselves, as well as an ability to counteract loss of the steering ability. Their natural aspiration is to increase those abilities, because the greater the abilities are, the more effective Human influence on their environment is. Because those abilities grow with the development of human personality, the development should be regarded as a basic human interest.

The fact that the autonomous system possesses the same traits as man and the fact that any functions occurring in autonomous systems are satisfied in a human organism allows treating man as one of the special cases of an autonomous system, or it encourages statement that man is one of the categories of such system².

Thus, any dependencies resulting from analysis of steering processes in an autonomous system can be used for studying mental processes in man, because they are steering processes.

On the ground of the theory of autonomous systems, I have developed a theory of constant individual traits of human personality³. In the systemic theory, the image of man is approached by means of the method of a theoretical model called the pattern (this is the first systemic method). The method is used when a real-life object is so complicated that creation of its model is impossible (the situation refers to man as the real-life object). This method involves defining a theoretical model and treating it as a pattern. If the real object meets the defining postulates of its theoretical model, relationships proved for this model refer to the real object, which is a source of new, true and significant information about the real object.

The second method of creating a model of a real object, which is quite often used in systemic studies, is effective when real objects are so uncomplicated

² The theory of autonomous systems, developed by M. Mazur, was first published in his book titled *Cybernetic theory of autonomous systems*, Warsaw, 1966

³ The theory of constant individual traits of human personality was published by J. Wilsz [in:] J. Wilsz, *Znaczenie niekształtawalnych cech osobowości człowieka w procesie kształcenia przedzawodowego* (The Importance of Non-formative Traits of Human Personality in the Pre-occupational Education), Częstochowa 1996, as well as [in:] I. Вільш, *Структура, зміст і функції сталих індивідуальних якостей учня у процесі допрофесійного навчання і виховання* (Structure, Essence and Functions of the Constant Individual Traits of Personality of a Pupil During Pre-occupational Training and Education), Київ (Kiev, Ukraine) 1997; J. Wilsz, *Psychologizowana wersja koncepcji stałych indywidualnych cech osobowości i jej wykorzystanie przy wyborze zawodu* (Psychology Oriented Version of the Concept of Constant Individual Traits of Personality and Its Application to Choosing an Occupation) [in:] „Kształcenie zawodowe: pedagogika i psychologia” nr III, ("Vocational Education: Pedagogy and Psychology", No. III), ed. by T. Lewowicki, J. Wilsz, I. Ziaziuń i N. Nyczkało, Częstochowa – Kijów 2001.

that creating a model of a true imitation of the real-life is possible. As creation of a model being a true imitation of man is impossible, the second systemic method is not used for solving problems related to human beings.

In the systemic theory of constant individual traits of human personality, the first systemic method (i.e. the method of a theoretical model) was used. The autonomous system was assumed to be such an autonomous model. Hence, a theoretical model of such a system constitutes the theoretical basis for the theory of constant individual traits of personality.

The proposed system of traits is based on a construct of processes related to information and energy flow (loading, processing, storing and exporting information and energy). The processes mentioned above are characterized by functional dependencies that help in maintaining relative functional balance (i.e. homeostasis). Magnitude and kind of disturbances in the functional balance are determined by situational determinants. Inner determinants of homeostatic (self-regulation) processes occurring in man are constituted by his or her constant individual personality traits (which may be treated as stable individual differences) and by variable traits (which may be treated as unstable individual differences).

According to the theory of constant individual traits of personality, two groups of traits can be distinguished among traits of human personality: constant individual traits of personality (i.e. traits that are independent of influence of the environment) and variable traits (i.e. traits dependent on influence of the environment, but within the confines determined by constant individual traits of personality). Constant individual traits of human personality correspond to constant steering properties of an autonomous system, while variable traits of human personality correspond to variable steering properties of that system. Two groups of traits can be distinguished among constant individual traits of personality:

1. Traits connected with intellectual functions:

- **processibility**, which is a degree of perfection of thinking processes;
- **reproducibility**, which is a degree of perfection in perception and mnemonic processes;
- **talent**, which is a degree of perfection in a given field of activity.

2. Traits connected with interpersonal relationships:

- emissivity:
 - **positive emissivity** is a tendency to transfer more resources to one's environment than one draws from the environment,
 - **zero emissivity** is a tendency to transfer the same quantity of resources to one's environment as one draws from the environment,

- **negative emissivity** is a tendency to draw more resources from one's environment than one transfers to the environment.
- **tolerance** is the range of environmental influence to which one's personality reacts positively (voluntarily);
- **flexibility** is the range of environmental influence to which one's personality reacts positively, but under certain pressure.

It results from the theory of constant individual traits of human personality, that all influences exerted on a given man within the confines of constant individual traits of his or her personality, to be effective, must be adjusted to those traits. People are able to adapt to different situations only within the confines of variable traits of their personalities. Distinguishing constant and variable traits of personality allows determining situations to which a given man can adapt – which is possible only in reference to variable traits of personality, as well as situations that must be adapted to him or her – which is necessary in reference to constant individual traits of personality.

Thus, knowledge of constant individual traits of one's personality allows determining situations (both in his or her private and occupational life) that are the most appropriate, as well as situations that are potentially conflicting.

Constant individual traits of human personality can be identified with certain congenital human mental predispositions and may be regarded as man's mental basis on which variable traits form and develop, affected by environmental influence, education process, learning process, experience, and people's work on themselves.

The theory of the autonomous system and the theory of constant individual traits of personality allow treating man as an integral unity and making allowances for all correlations between people and their environment. From the point of view of those theories, „man as a whole” means unity of processes related to information and energy flow in people⁴. Strict mutual influences and correlations between those processes result in the fact that any kind of disturbance caused by stimuli inappropriate for a given man⁵ disturb functioning of his or her whole organism by disturbing its functional balance, as well as the fact that people react to these disturbances with their whole organisms.

One can disturb functional balance of man by forcing him or her to take up activities that are incompatible with constant individual traits of his or her personality, as well as by making it impossible for him or her to take up activities compatible with those traits. Considering maintenance of the most favourable state of functional balance, the most appropriate situation for man is a situation

⁴ Processes of information and energy flow, occurring in people, are coupled with each other, in a way that provides maintenance of the functional balance.

⁵ Inappropriate stimuli are those incompatible to one's constant individual traits of personality.

that delivers him or her stimuli compatible to constant individual traits of his or her personality. Man's mental state induced by such a situation is the best possible one. Such a situation most effectively facilitates people's full development.

In the course of achieving compatibility between a situation and constant individual traits of man's personality, their disturbed functional balance is being restored. This induces man's attractive emotions, which activate an individual to self-creation and make it possible for him or her to realize their own possibilities most effectively, which results in their feeling of satisfaction and self-realization. Man is most satisfied with the stage of reaching the functional balance, not the ideal state, which is, nevertheless, a state of stagnation. The state of functional balance is only a transitive state and, in practice, man's inner processes fluctuate around that state. Therefore, people's tendency to restore their functional balance and the process of achieving it should be regarded as the most important inner need, motivating them to action.

On the grounds of the theory of constant individual traits of personality and the theory of autonomous systems, not only can postulates of humanistic psychology be confirmed and justified but new postulates, which were not realized in traditional school, can also be formed and justified.

Due to the fact that man's aspirations and desires, motivating his or her actions, result from constant individual traits of his or her personality, the best possible conditions for man's development are those which enable his or her to take actions which eventually lead to compatibility between the situation and constant individual traits of their personality.

For ages, the traditional school has been trying to treat pupils as plastic objects. Teachers focused mainly on teaching knowledge situated within the confines of variable traits of personality, due to their lack of competence as to the constant individual traits of their pupils' personalities. Basically, all pupils were treated in the same way. All of them were supplied with the same information and they had to satisfy the same requirements, all of them were required to possess the same knowledge.

Such a homogenous education, delivering the same stimuli to all pupils, is not appropriate when one takes into account the constant individual traits of their personalities. In the majority of them, it induces feeling of weariness and discouragement, and under the influence of such stimuli, they take some actions reluctantly, merely under constraint.

Very often, school's influence involves applying constraint, which does not yield satisfactory results. Pupils are forced to take actions incompatible to constant individual traits of their personalities, and equally often they are forbidden to take actions compatible to those traits. As such influence disturbs natural, complete development of pupils, it should be eliminated and replaced with influence stimulating and inspiring their independent, active, and creative behav-

ior, activating their inner potential. Such influence should consist mainly in supporting pupils' development, compatible to their congenital predispositions that are constituted by constant individual traits of their personalities, because such a development is the most effective one.

The theory of constant individual traits of personality allows better knowledge and comprehension of human personality and mechanisms of its development. This allows determining conditions providing the best possible development for each individual human being.

On the grounds of educational implications of the theory of constant individual traits of personality, one can formulate postulates which should be used when forming an image of future education system, when defining goals and functions of education, a system of organization of education, and methods of teaching.

It results from the theory of constant individual traits of human personality that an education system should:

- allow full self-cognition of pupils (learning their own personalities and understanding their own needs, aspirations and behaviours), which is given to them by making them aware of the constant individual traits of their personalities;
- help pupils in their occupational and life-related self-determination, appropriate to the constant individual traits of their personalities;
- allow pupils' self-realization by making them realize their potential possibilities resulting from the constant individual traits of their personalities;
- encourage pupils in developing their life-oriented competences, skills and attitudes appropriately to the constant individual traits of their personalities;
- satisfy pupils' needs resulting from constant individual traits of their personalities, by delivering them stimuli appropriate to those traits;
- create conditions supporting pupils' development compatible to the constant individual traits of their personalities, activating their creative possibilities resulting from the traits;
- resign from forcing pupils to perform activities incompatible with constant individual traits of their personalities while making it possible for them to take up activities compatible with those traits;
- allow pupils choosing educational methods that are appropriate for the constant individual traits of their personalities;
- teach pupils skills helping them to avoid and solve interpersonal conflicts, as well as develop their ability of making an independent

choice of people in terms of compatibility of their constant traits of personality in different types of situations.

An educational system that takes into account the role and function of constant individual traits of human personality should be able to fulfill people's needs and desires, to realize their development possibilities and aspirations, to create conditions and perspectives allowing them to reach the summit of their possibilities in their further life, as well as to guarantee their effective functioning in the future, continuously changing, reality.

Introducing educational changes, the need for which results from the theory of constant individual traits of human personality, can result in the fact that the future education system will be not only much more humanistic⁶, but also much more effective, and that, to a large degree thanks to the fact that it will make people's existence more humanistic.

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IMPLIKACJE WYNIKAJĄCE Z TEORII STAŁYCH INDYWIDUALNYCH CECH OSOBOWOŚCI CZŁOWIEKA DLA SYSTEMU EDUKACJI

Streszczenie

Zaprezentowano koncepcję stałych indywidualnych cech osobowości, pozwalającą na wyróżnienie cech osobowości, które są niezależne od oddziaływań otoczenia. Scharakteryzowano tradycyjny system kształcenia w aspekcie tej koncepcji. Przedstawiono implikacje wynikające z koncepcji stałych indywidualnych cech osobowości dla systemu edukacji. Stanowią one zbiór postulatów adresowanych do jego reformatorów które powinny przyczynić się do tego by system ten stał się bardziej efektywny i humanistyczny niż tradycyjny.

Słowa kluczowe: system edukacji, stałe indywidualne cechy osobowości