STEREOTYPES AS STIGMATIZING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education embraces various activities that aim to help the socialization of children with antisocial behavior and act as protective factors for reducing the risk of antisocial behavior. Pedagogues, psychologists and educators from different institutions play major role in the management of such activities. They are not only the organizers but also mentors, whose influence is crucial to the effectiveness of inclusive education. On the other hand, their motivation depends on their attitude towards their clients - delinquents. That makes the study of the stereotypes that pedagogues, psychologists and educators have toward the group of minor and juvenile delinquents of high importance. Their stereotypical perception can turn into a barrier to effective implementation of programs for inclusive education, stigmatizing them in a negative way. This paper presents a study of the stereotypes in a sample of the so-called public educators engaged in activities, which are conducted by the Anti-nuisance commissions of minor and juvenile offenders. The model SCM (Stereotype Content Model) is used, which is developed by S.Fiske, P.Glik and A.Cuddy. The survey results show that the negative stereotypes of children - delinquents are prevalent. That conclusion outlines the need for specialized training for professionals, engaged in the activities for inclusive education of minor and juvenile offenders.

Key Words: Inclusive education, delinquents, stereotypes, SCM.

INTRODUCTION

A Model for inclusive education for minor and juvenile offenders

A good model for inclusive education for miner and juvenile offenders should consist of three main stages. The first one is to identify the main risk factors and risk assessment of the delinquent behavior of children. In general, 'risk factor' is defined as that characteristic variable or event, which, if present in an individual, it makes it more likely for the problem to be manifested (in this case it is an offense – note of mine) in this individual, in comparison with any other subject of the general population (Pollard, Hawkins & Arthur, 1999). Criminologists have found that there is more than one way to become delinquent and have noticed that in the presence of several risk factors the likelihood of committing a crime naturally increases. Also, the focus is on the interaction between these factors, to the cumulative effect of the presence of a number of these conditions and to how some *protective factors* can reduce these risks (Farrington, 2005). The methodology that includes risk assessment takes into account the probabilistic nature of the estimates based on this approach: although it is experimentally proved that the risk factors can predict recurrence of criminal behavior, there are individuals, who are exposed to multiple risk factors but never commit crimes. This can be interpreted in the context of the psychological constructs *free will* and *personal choice* - human individuals are thinking beings, subjects of decisions and choices between different options, which also probably depends on the positive impact of certain conditions, described also as protective factors. These conditions are kind of a 'buffer' between the risk factors and the act of violating the law. They mediate the effects of exposure to risk factors, leading to a reduction in the proliferation of criminal behavior (Pollard et al., 1999). There are two principal

169

points of definition of the construct 'protective factor'. One of them considers the protective factors as the opposite poles of a risk continuum. For example, the high success rate in school can be considered a protective factor as the other pole is the school failure, which often leads to consequences such as running away and dropping out of school, unstable and low self-esteem and many other negative consequences, motivating children to perform antisocial acts. Another point considers protective factors as characteristics or conditions that interact with risk factors, thereby reducing their impact on the behavior of individuals. For example, poverty is often seen as a significant risk factor for delinquency, but the presence of supportive, caring parents can modify the negative impact of poverty, reducing the likelihood of adolescents performing nuisance.

The approaches based on the methodology of risk assessment include four main stages to manage the problem:

- *Monitoring* - development and improvement of the system for data collection and analysis of the status and distribution (epidemiological analysis);
- *Identification of the risk group* - definition of individuals with the highest risk; places, time and other important conditions that are associated with increased risk;
- *Study of risk factors* - analysis of potential causal mechanisms for the impact of risk factors;
- *Implementation and evaluation of programs* - planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation of preventive measures based on the identification of populations at risk and identified risk factors related to the community (Pollard et al., 1999);

The second stage of the model for inclusive education includes development of individual profiles for each child and teenager at risk in which to address specific deficits, needs and requirements of each individual belonging to the target group. This profile includes the available social, individual resources and protective factors that have a positive influence and can be used to increase the effect from activities related to inclusive education. Therefore, when analyzing the data for each particular child or teenager, we can distinguish those risk factors with the greatest influence on the antisocial behavior so the specialists can draw out the requirements for positive intervention (Prodanov, 2013:1).

The third and last stage of the model for inclusive education consists of working out a program of educational and psychological targeted activities, which are specific to each child or young person at risk. Of course, the systematic approach assumes that, when implementing programs for inclusive education, they are supposed to be a part of the activities carried out by different institutions with a common goal - the reduction and elimination of negative influences on behavior to minimize the long-term and short-term antisocial potential in each separate case. In the section on inclusive education the following activities can be accomplished:

- Support from special educator in case of certain physical or mental deficits;
- Ensuring regular school attendance, overcoming the barriers that impede the child or teenager from attending school (e.g. abuse by other students may be the main reason for a truancy);
- Training in vocational skills through special training courses with regards to the interests and abilities of the child or adolescent;
- Individual forms of learning, including home-teaching when it is appropriate;
- Creating sufficient opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities related to sports, dance, music, visual, theater, and the organization of public events for children and adolescents involved in such activities where they can manifest their talents;
- Influencing on attitudes of parents or guardians for more involvement with the activities related to individual learning of their teenagers (Prodanov, 2013-1).

Why is it important to talk about the stereotypes in context of the relationships between professionals and their clients – minor and juvenile offenders?
Qualified professionals are committed with inclusive education of minors and juvenile offenders. Their professional competence could not be questioned. But their motivation to work with such a group of children depends on the attitudes they have towards them. In this sense, those social psychological constructs, which describe intergroup relations must be considered. This is because of the fact that labeling the children as 'minor and juvenile offenders' categorizes them in another social group, which is different than the group of law-abiding children and law-abiding citizens who respect the laws and regulatory requirements of the society.

170

In interpersonal relations people often are guided by inter-group stereotypes. According to W.Lippmann (1997), stereotypes are preconceptions of others, often not as a result of personal experience. To form stereotypes, it is first necessary for the individuals to be perceived as belonging to different social groups, i.e. they must have different social identity. According to H.Tajfel and J.Turner, 'social identity' is defined as the awareness of one's affiliation and belonging to a certain social group together with the value and emotional importance, which are attributed to its membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The basis of this self-identification is the cognitive process of categorization. The categorization is fundamental to the processing of the incoming information about the physical and social objects. Indeed, we permanently compare the perceived objects between each other, as well as we compare them with us. This process allows clear distribution of objects into groups. This is a cognitive function that is inherent in human thinking. Moreover, according to Tajfel categorization increases existing differences between objects, which are perceived as belonging to different categories (groups, classes) and reduces differences between objects that belong to the same group. Therefore, categorization can explain the formation of stereotypes by means of putting the people into separate groups. When we perceive particular individual as equal to us by certain criterion (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, etc.), we categorize him as object of 'in-group', and when he is different we put him in 'out-group'. What makes our perception insufficiently objective is that we are insensitive to differences between objects, whether of our group or which belong to another (Tajfel, 1974). In fact, we begin to perceive in the same way all of the objects in the separate group. This exactly constitutes the stereotyping. But is insufficient objectivity of stereotypes in the individual assessment rooted solely in defects of cognitive level?

The criterion for assessing the objectivity of stereotypes can hardly be found, because besides the cognitive processes that underlie the formation of stereotypes, significant interactions between the social groups must be taken into account. Stereotypes are common shared beliefs of the representatives of a social community on what the likely impacts of the other group on them are. For example, the stereotypes are not only the result of cognitive processes of categorization, but also a function of existing and/or probabilistic intergroup relationships.

The nature of inter-group relations as a factor of stereotypes is one of the fundamental principles of the model SCM (Stereotype Content Model) (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Jun Xu, 2002). In accordance to this model the stereotypes reflect the overall shared evaluation of the representatives of a particular social group on what the probable influences of other social groups on them are. According to the authors of this model, there are two main dimensions of inter-group stereotypical perceptions by means of which the individual distinguishes members of other social groups according to their likely effects either on the recipient or upon his own group. These dimensions are related and necessary for the assessment of the intentions and capabilities of the 'others'. Despite the importance of specific, historically contingent beliefs, much of the variation in stereotypes is due to the underlying dimensions 'warmth' and 'competence' (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008). The functional significance and universality of the dimensions 'warmth' and 'competence' come from their reference to two crucial aspects, which are basic circumstances for the survival and development of our social world, composed of many groups and communities. First, people need to predict the intentions of others towards them. Therefore, the features included in the dimension 'warmth' - ethics, reliability, sincerity, benevolence and kindness, evaluate the perceived intentions of others in the social context. Second, individuals should be aware of other's abilities to pursue and realize their intentions. In this sense, the 'competence' includes traits such as efficiency, dexterity, creativity, confidence and intelligence - they relate to the perceived ability of others to realize their intentions. In short, people distinguish the groups of fellows as well as other relevant social groups in accordance with their likely effects on their personality or the group of affiliation (in-group), which is determined by the perceived intentions and capabilities of the other groups' members. SCM assumes the existing of two main categories of stereotypes - univalent and ambivalent. In case of univalent stereotypes two types are possible: the first, when low esteems of 'competence' combine with low esteems of 'warmth' and the second - when high esteems of 'competence' combine with high levels of 'warmth'. Many groups are perceived ambivalent, receiving positive evaluations in one dimension but negative - on the other. For example there are social communities, which are considered 'competent' but not 'warm' or vice versa - there are groups that are perceived as 'warm' but 'incompetent' (e.g. the elderly). It is important to underline that the positive subjective

assessments of one dimension don't exclude the prejudice and don't reduce the likelihood of discrimination based on unfavorable assessment of the second dimension. One of the principles of SCM is related to the social-structural origin of the perceived 'warmth' and 'competence'. It turns out that the groups, which are perceived as competitive receive low assessments on 'warmth' and those, which are ascribed as high status groups are perceived as 'competent'. An explanation may be sought in the context of the functional significance of stereotypes and their social-structural roots. The groups with high status (e.g. 'the Rich') are considered competent until the low-status groups (e.g. 'the Poor') - incompetent. This probably stems from the widespread assumption that the status is invariably linked to the ability (as opposed to factors such as opportunities, luck or inheritance). Regarding the relationship between competitiveness and warmth SCM assumes that the assessment of the existence of rivalry and competition brings about a perception of group relations as conflict because of incompatible groups' goals. The representatives of their own group, its allies and other related groups do not compete with each other, so they are defined as 'warm'. On the other hand, the conciliatory, submissive groups perform 'convenient roles' and for that reason they are treated with 'benevolent prejudice'. Such social groups, which are treated ambivalently, are people with disabilities, housewives, elderly people who are perceived as incompetent, while viewed positively as warm because of their characteristics that make them submissive and the fact that they do not compete for economic or educational resources. Conversely, the groups, which are perceived as competing to us, at the same time, are stereotyped as 'cold' precisely because of the idea of incompatibility of their goals with the goals of our group. If they are successful, the 'out-groups' get our respect but also make us feel envy that they control resources and that is a reason for us to never like them. Furthermore, some low-status groups are not perceived as successful competitors, but nevertheless, there is a tendency for them to be assessed as 'freeloaders' in the sense that if any resources go for them, they will squander all. These are groups of welfare recipients, who are seen as parasites, they contribute nothing to society but only suck resources through the social assistance system, which is subsidized by taxes on other social communities. Because their objectives are perceived as incompatible with the goals of others, the groups mentioned above are also low assessed on 'warmth'. In short, when we think that a certain group has plans to compete for resources and goods, we tune ourselves negatively to its members, describing them as unreliable, cold and unfriendly. This stereotype performs and functions to mobilize and unite the members of one group to compete more successfully with the 'foreigner groups'. Conversely, knowing that a given social community has a spirit of cooperation, it forms a positive attitude towards these representatives, who are described as warm, friendly and reliable partners. Positive stereotype motivates cooperation.

One aspect of the research framework of the SCM is related to the emotional reactions of the individuals, depending on the perceived 'warmth' and 'competence'. Four combinations of high/low warmth and high/low competence produce four basic emotions: admiration (respect), contempt, envy and compassion (pity). The groups, which are stereotyped as warm and competent enjoy our respect and admiration. The ones considered as incompetent and cold (e.g. 'homeless') receive our contempt. The competent but cold groups provoke our envy and those, who are stereotyped as warm but incompetent (e.g. 'the elderly') – pity (Cuddy et al., 2008: 102-105).

SCM also analyzes the behavioral aspects of assessments 'warmth' and 'competence', their projections in social interactions. It is assumed that the four possible combinations of high/low scores on both dimensions lead to specific behaviors: active facilitation, active harm, passive facilitation and passive harm. Since the dimension 'warmth' is paramount (because it is related to the assessment of the intentions of others - my note), assessments on this scale motivate active behaviors: groups, which are assessed as 'warm', receive our active facilitation, while the groups, which we perceive as 'cold' receive active harm (e.g. can be attacked). The competence dimension, which is the second most important (as it assesses the ability of others to accomplish their intentions), causes passive facilitation (e.g. 'advisable association' and 'convenient cooperation'). And those, who are assessed as incompetent, provoke passive harm (neglect) (Cuddy et al., 2008:107-111).

As it is clear, the affective component of stereotypes may bring about ambivalent behavior. For example, the groups to which we feel pity can get either our active support or be ignored (passive harm) – e.g. older people, who receive special care sometimes but in other cases are neglected. This is true also for the people with disabilities status, who are placed in institutions. As for the groups to which we feel envy because of their high competence, they can get both - our passive cooperation but also to suffer from active harm sometimes. For example, we buy from the shops of the rich increasing their wealth, but in a situation of economic and/or social crisis, these same stores can be broken down and looted by the same customers who used to shop there before.

METHOD

Sample
Fifty-four respondents filled out the questionnaire, which is used by authors of the SCM.[1] All these participants are psychologists, social workers, teachers, secretaries and members of municipal anti-nuisance commissions of minor and juvenile offenders. The sample is not representative as far as the present study is a trial study. The average age of participants is approximately 40 years (Mean = 39.8). The age of participants ranged from 25 to 70 years (there are three persons, who have not indicated their age). There is a considerable variation in the expertise of the participants particular in activities with juvenile offenders - from 3 months to 40 years (Mean = 7 years). The sample is unbalanced concerning gender – 9 participants are men and 43 are women (there are two persons, who have not indicated their gender). The test procedure involved filling out an anonymous questionnaire; data on gender, age and experience is gathered on the grounds that they are necessary for the scientific conclusions of the study.

Instrumentarium
The instrumentarium consists of the items of the original questionnaire, probed by L. Andreeva and S. Karabeliova on Bulgarian sample (Andreeva & Karabeliova, 2011). A specific emphasis is made when instructing the respondents – they are asked to answer according to how other people in their own group would assess the objects - in this case children who are delinquents. Thus, the aim is to actuate stereotyped assessment, which is a consequence of the social group identity of the participants, different from the one of the young offenders. The structure of the questionnaire includes two scales – 'warmth' and 'competence'. The features describing warmth are: *tolerant, warm (affectionate), good-natured and sincere*. The items of competence are: *competent, confident, intelligent, independent and competitive*. Total number of items in questionnaire is nine. For assessment it is used a five-point scale with variations of responses from 'strongly disagree' (evaluation 1) to 'completely agree' (evaluation 5).

FINDINGS

The statistical processing of the data was carried out with the program SPSS for Windows. Table N1 represents some data of descriptive statistics of scales 'warmth' and 'competence'. As the table shows, the average values of the data on the two dimensions - *warmth* and *competence*, are lower than 3. Assessment '3' is an average score of five-point scales, so it divides the space delineated by the two dimensions. Thus the space is divided into four quadrants. The type of a stereotype depends on the quadrant in which it is positioned - that defines whether a stereotype is univalent or ambivalent and whether it can produce prejudice and discriminatory behavior.

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[1] Assistance in collecting the data and conducting survey was done from student of psychology Maria Urilska.

Table 1: Number of Sample, Means, St. Deviations, Minimal and Maximum esteems

		Competence	*Warmth*
N	Valid	54	54
	Missing	0	0
Mean		**2,51**	**1,99**
Std. Deviation		0,72	0,69
Minimum		1,00	1,00
Maximum		3,80	3.50

Table 2 reflects some psychometric characteristics of the two scales, which attest to their internal consistency and reliability. Data values of Cronbach's alpha are satisfactory. Similar values of Cronbach's alpha were obtained in another study with a different Bulgarian sample and with different purpose – study of stereotypes about nations (Prodanov, 2013-2).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics: Internal Consistency of the Scales Warmth and Competence – Cronbach's Alpha

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Competence	**0,68**	5
Warmth	**0,75**	4

Table 3: Correlations between *Warmth* and *Competence*

Correlations	*Competence*	*Warmth*
Competence		
Pearson Correlation	1,00	**0,140**
Sig.(2-taied)		*0,312*
N	54	54
Kendall's tau_b	1,00	**0,005**
Sig.(2-taied)		*0,958*
N	54	54
Warmth		
Pearson Correlation	**0,140**	1,00
Sig.(2-taied)	*0,312*	
N	54	54
Kendall's tau_b	**0,005**	1,00
Sig.(2-taied)	*0,958*	
N	54	54

Furthermore, two types of correlations are presented in Table 3: parametric Pearson's coefficients of correlation and Kendall's nonparametric correlations. Insignificant correlations between two scales show that they are independent dimensions. These results support the theoretical assumptions of the SCM.
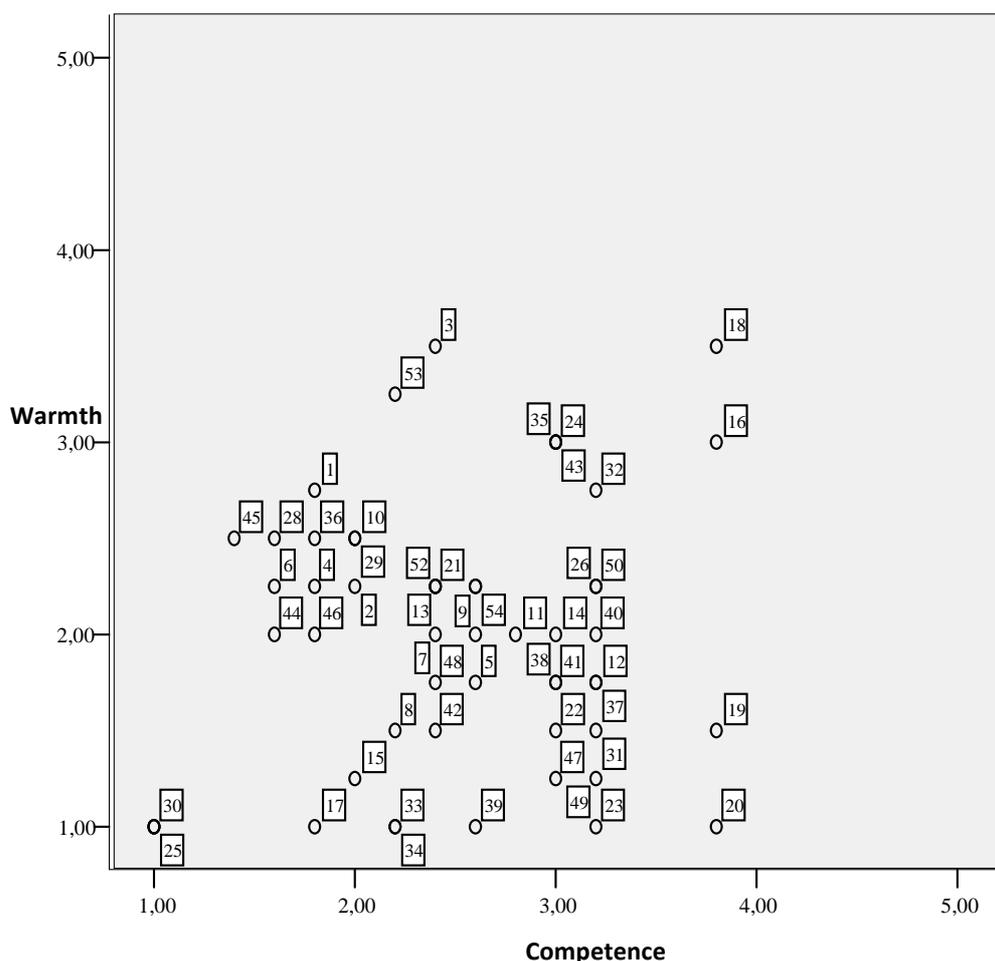
174

Figure 1: Spatial Dispersion of Stereotyped Perceptions of the Respondents (Scatter Plot)

Figure 1 presents the dispersion of stereotypical perceptions of each inquired person according to the specific values of the two dimensions - *warmth* and *competence* (the numbers next to the dots in the figure correspond to the participants' serial number in the survey data list). As it can be seen, the vast majority of the sample falls in the quadrant with univalent negative stereotypes. In fact, it can be said that only one of the respondents has relatively positive univalent stereotypical perception of delinquent children. A small portion of the sample manifests contradictory attitudes - the first group is those, whose assessments of competence are greater than 3, but the assessments of warmth are lower than 3; the second group with ambivalent stereotypes consists of those, whose assessments of warmth is higher than 3 but on competence they have lower assessments than 3 (there are only two people in this position). It is important to point out that people with either ambivalent or negative univalent stereotypes are expected to think with prejudices and act discriminatory either explicitly or implicitly.

DISCUSSION

First, the results of the study are consistent with other studies applying SCM and, moreover, they demonstrate good psychometric parameters of the instrumentarium. This can be taken as proof of the universality of the two dimensions ('warmth' and 'competence') with respect to the stereotypes.

175

Second, it appears that the stereotypes of people who are engaged with various educational and corrective influences on young delinquents are predominantly univalent and negative. This is a basis of prejudice and discrimination toward 'out-group' of minor and juvenile offenders. The traits that mentors attribute to minor and juvenile offenders form an extremely negative image of this group. This means that professionals of the inquired sample have a kind of a social identity, which explicitly excludes the group of delinquent children and sends them to the opposite pole - with the out-groups, perceived as threat to the interests of their own group. As far as whether the stereotypes reflect existing and/or likely attitudes to interpersonal relationships between mentors and their delinquent clients, we can see that these attitudes are too distant (at least of the mentors, who were being inquired). Moreover, the results show that the majority of the surveyed mentors probably feel a sense of contempt for their clients. This in turn is important for motivation and diligence, which these professionals put in their work: according to the SCM stereotypes of this type have a negative emotional and behavioral component. As far as feelings of the mentors to their clients, which are predominantly negative, the mentor's behavior in the best case will be oriented towards 'passive harm'. Passive harm can be expressed in formal attitude to the duties and activities designed to help offenders in overcoming their deficits, changing their thinking and building models of social positive behavior. With such a negative stereotype, the mentors are more likely to participate in these processes inefficiently, since they probably do not believe that their efforts will lead to a positive change in the life style of minor and juvenile delinquents.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the specialists who will implement activities related to inclusive education of minor and juvenile offenders are main factor for the efficacy of these activities. This raises questions about their qualifications, experience and abilities. The study presented above raises a question that refers to the social psychology of interpersonal relations. By reason of the categorization, the children with antisocial behavior are stigmatized. The stigma brands and insulates them in a separate group of social outsiders, who are considered as not only quite incompetent to deal with the challenges of life, but are also seen as dangerous for loyal-to-law citizens. These children are considered as threat with their criminal behavior to the resources and interests of other social groups. This fact brings about to the formation of univalent negative stereotypes that become regulators of the interpersonal relationships between other people and this particular group - the delinquent children. The professionals who work with these children are also subordinated of this stereotypical thinking. But exactly these professionals are called to 'bring out' young offenders from their unfavorable group and then to 'include' them in groups of loyal citizens. This process will be hardly effective if the mentors themselves have extremely negative attitudes and are not motivated, and do not believe in the successful resocialization of the minor and juvenile offenders. From this perspective, it would be appropriate to establish procedures for selection of the experts, which include the assessment of their attitudes towards young offenders. Furthermore, it could provide specialized training modules for mentors themselves to form tolerance, so that they have a differentiated approach, which reflects the individual characteristics of the delinquent children with their positive, not just negative traits.

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