



# Relationship between self-esteem of university students and their attitudes towards employment of VI persons

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# Attitudes

- primary barrier to employment of VI persons are employers' negative attitudes (eg. Crudden, McBroom, Skinner, Moore, 1998; Golub, 2006; Lee, Abdullah, Mey, 2011)
- attitudes are multifactorial and their determinants are important to be examined

# Self-esteem

- influences attitudes, expectations, judgments and all aspects of life (Lawrence, 2006)
- is related to different interpretations of difficulties in life and successful in dealing with them (Keller, Siegrist, 2011)

# Contacts/communication

- contact with people with disabilities are relevant for attitudes (Au & Man, 2006; Fries, 1991)
- stereotypes are more potent when judging unknown individuals and when considering whole groups (Myers, 1993)

# Aims

1. to investigate relationship between students' self-esteem and their attitudes towards employment of VI persons
2. to investigate relationship between students' contacts with VI persons and their attitudes towards employment of VI persons

# Hypotheses

1. students with higher self-esteem have more positive attitudes towards VI people than students with lower self-esteem
2. students with contacts have more positive attitudes than students without contacts with VI people

# Participants

- 427 students from the faculties of:
  - teaching
  - social work
  - education and rehabilitation
  - physiotherapy
  - agronomy
  - economy
  - electrical engineering and computing
- M: 87 (20.4%) F: 340 (79.6%)
- age range: 18 – 32; M=20.7, SD=1.61

# Instruments

- attitudes towards employment of VI persons: SZS scale (24 statements – 5 to be chosen)
- self-esteem: Rosenberg's scale (10 items, Lickert type)
- contacts with VI persons: *Have you ever had contacts/communication with a VI person? Y/N*



# Results – self-esteem

- self-esteem range: 10 – 40 (possible: 0 - 40)
- $M = 30.5$ ;  $SD: 5,50$
- high self-esteem =  $M+1 SD: 79$  (18.5%)
- low self-esteem =  $M-1 SD: 84$  (19.7%)
- no sign. differences in attitudes towards employment of VI persons between lower and higher self-esteemed groups ( $t = -0.23$ ;  $df = 161$ ;  $p = .821$ )

# Results – self-esteem

- both self-esteem groups chose the same 5 attitudes as the most important attitudes:
  - Every VI person is capable for some profession.
  - VI persons show differences in capabilities as persons without VI.
  - Employed VI persons easier live with VI than the unemployed VI person.
  - VI is a barrier for achieving good working results only for specific work places.
  - VI persons are more persistent than the persons without VI.

# Results – self-esteem

- BUT there are differences in some attitudes:
- more students with lower self-esteem (63.1%) think that VI persons show differences in capabilities as persons without VI (compared to 46.8%);
- more students with lower self-esteem (14.3%) find sheltered employment as the most appropriate working place for VI persons (compared to 5.1%);
- most students with higher self-esteem (72.2%) presume that VI is a barrier for achieving good working results only for specific work places (compared to 44%)

# Results – self-esteem

- higher education is generally more positive related with positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- no difference in attitudes between high/low self-esteem groups – due to a narrower range/selected population

# Results - contacts

- $M_{\text{with contacts}} = 807.4; SD = 100.99$
- $M_{\text{without contacts}} = 781.0; SD = 138.86$
- $t = -2.04; df = 246; p = .043$
  
- however, both groups – with and without contacts with VI chose the same 5 attitudes as the most important attitudes (same as low/high self-esteem groups)

# Results - contacts

- there are differences in some attitudes:
- most students who had contacts presume that there are as many egoists among VI persons as in the general population and that VI persons have equal capabilities comparing with the general population;
- most students who never had contacts with VI persons consider that VI persons are more likely to change work places than workers with normal sight and that VI persons have a bigger need that somebody takes care of them at the workplace

# Conclusion

1. university students' levels of self-esteem does not differ them in their attitudes towards employment of VI persons
2. students' contacts with VI persons are related with slightly more positive attitudes towards employment of VI persons

# Implications

- to investigate the relationship between the level of education, self-esteem and attitudes towards employment of VI persons
- in order to reduce negative attitudes towards VI persons - personalise members of the group
- further examine the nature (quantity and quality) of the relationship between contacts with VI persons and attitudes towards employment of VI persons