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## **Empirical approach to investigation of assertiveness characteristics**

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**Annotation.** The results of the theoretical empirical research of the individual psychological features of assertiveness are presented in the article, a psychological image of assertive and unassertive individuals is given. "Questionnaire of assertiveness components" (QAC) by O. P. Sannikova, O. I. Sannikov, N. M. Podoliak, The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (or 16PF) by Raymond Cattell and static methods of data processing, such as a quantitative (correlative) and qualitative (method of "ACes" and "profiles") result analysis were used. It was also revealed that assertiveness has correlations with a great number of personal factors (by Raymond Cattell), namely with such personality traits as affectothymia, self-strength, social boldness, self-sufficiency, extraversion, pragmatism and is accompanied by the absence of suspicion, guilt-proneness, frustration, anxiety. It was also established that an assertive personality is characterized by the following features: cheerfulness, self-confidence, insensitivity to criticism, vigor, spontaneity, adventurousness etc. Assertive people show emotional sensibility, emotional stability, easily get upset.

**Keywords:** *assertiveness, assertive behavior, assertive personality, unassertive personality*

The relevance of the problem is explained by modern realities of social life, which require a human to be socially active, brave, self-starter, to realize one's own real merits and capabilities, to be able to assert oneself, to go ahead with one's plans and reveal one's own potential. The high pace of life, a large amount of information, uniqueness of its obtaining, necessity of interaction with other people in conditions of highly competitive job market and many other circumstances put forward new demands for a personality and his/her traits. Under such conditions some character traits of a personality may come in full force, or on the contrary, potential features may not be revealed and may be converted from subjective difficulties into an objective obstacle to adequate social intercourse. Human's inability to set and realize one's own goals, needs, desires, aspirations, interests and feelings causes dissatisfaction with his/her own life, incapacity of planning his/her own future, uprising social fear, creates difficulties in communication.

That is why recent scientific investigations are focused on learning factors that influence the efficiency of social interaction of an individual. Existence of studied helplessness, inability to resist negative influence, social incompetence becomes a reason of insecure, passive and sometimes aggressive behavior. Aggressiveness and lack of confidence are interpreted as two forms of unassertiveness, while assertiveness is such personality trait, which gives an opportunity to change strategy and behavioral patterns flexibly, to reach goals with a glance to interests of others. Assertiveness allows a person to realize his/her own abilities in different life spheres. Assertiveness of an individual is one of the traits, which is able to provide an adequate interaction in society, achieving goals, promoting his/her self-improvement and self-development.

The concept of assertiveness began to be used because of practical requirements in psychotherapeutic and psychocorrective context. That is within psychotherapeutic practices this phenomenon was revealed. Nowadays the problem of assertiveness is an object of researches in management, conflictology, sociology, psychology of management, social psychology, psychotherapy etc. According to the subject of a certain science, assertiveness has its specificity in diverse fields of scientific knowledge.

Thus, conflictology considers assertiveness from the standpoint of conflict resolution in a constructive way. Assertive behavior provides clear and laconic explanation of one's demands and own behavior, and also contributes to the conflicts prevention.

Within personnel administration assertiveness is considered as a character trait, necessary for efficient leadership style, creating and maintaining positive psychological climate in the organization, management decision-making. In management this notion is often identified with a concept of confidence. A diffident subject, who makes a decision, often yield to external psychological pressure and is able to give up his/her own principles, beliefs, ideals, values and ideas, i.e. shows conformity. Assertiveness is explained as self-confidence and nonconformity. In the context of the problem of confidence in decision-making assertiveness is often interpreted as a professionally-meaningful trait of a manager.

In psychology the term "assertiveness" has appeared after the publication of Czech authors' (Vera Kapponi and Tomash Novak) book and since then it has become commonly used. This concept is understood as a certain private autonomy, independence on external impacts and estimations, capability to self-direction and ability to find the way out of problematic situations in communication constructively, to make independent decisions, leadership. These authors note that the efficiency of communication is greatly reduced without assertiveness, some communication and psychological barriers and conflicts, as well as neurotic states, can appear and personality development can be complicated [2].

In psychological literature assertiveness trainings, which are aimed at mastering skills of assertive behavior, are widely presented; there are also a number of researches about age dynamics of assertiveness, assertiveness development and its role in some areas of professional activity. Generally, scientific investigations of assertiveness are focused on learning behavior component of this phenomenon: in the context of professional activity (assertiveness of managers, teachers, medical workers), in connection with special conditions of adaptation (assertiveness in the process of adaptation of military men, sportsmen, sailors), due to creation of self-assertion strategies, self-presentation, as well as in the context of obtaining

practical abilities and skills of assertive behavior, communicative competence, conflict resolution, correction of destructive interaction, decision-making [1].

In scientific sources there are many approaches to assertiveness: as a form of social interaction that is opposed to aggression and manipulation; as a communicative device; as a behavior pattern in a conflict situation, culture of a dialogue [4]. Assertiveness is also treated as an ability to have one's own way, to respond to critics in an optimal way, unhesitatingly say "No" to oneself and others, if the circumstances require this; capacity to regulate one's own behavior and be responsible for it. Assertiveness is an ability to stand upon one's own rights without encroaching on other's ones. Assertive behavior is open behavior, which doesn't harm and disgrace other people [6]. In some scientific sources there is a definition of assertiveness as a behavior pattern, by which a person knows what he/she wants and what he doesn't want (at least in a current situation), and is able to formulate it clearly (without any fear, hesitation, stress, irony, sarcasm and other forms of personal attack); doesn't harm anybody, respects rights of others, and at the same time doesn't allow anybody "to twist himself/herself round one's little finger"; achieves goals without manipulating an opponent and doesn't use other methods of emotional blackmail; can convince others to help; in case of conflict of interests is able to negotiate and reach a compromise that satisfies both parties. Assertiveness is a confident defense of own interests or point of view taking into account other people's interests.

On the whole, in the study of assertiveness there are two main groups of investigation: the first one is focused on external manifestations of assertiveness (behavior pattern of personal successfulness), the second one deals with its internal manifestations (inner world of a personality, his/her existential state, emotions and trials etc.).

Thus, assertiveness involves rejection of reliance on authority, other people's opinions and estimations, spontaneous behavior in different reality situations according to own interests and motives, an ability to go beyond stereotype behavior and in every situation act to achieve a goal without violating rights and interests of other people. Assertiveness is a free expression of desires, interests, beliefs, a large degree of freedom in self-assertion, self-righteousness, self-respect and respect for people, acceptance that they have the same rights as you have. Assertive behavior is manifested in the capability to form relationship in the desired direction, i.e. in social skills; in the ability to appeal to other people with a request; in the capability to respond negatively to demands of others, to resist them; in self-respect; in self-confidence (a diffident person controls his emotions because of anxiety, he is guilt-prone and shows insufficient social skills). This trait is a basis of behavior, which is the happy medium between aggressive and passive behavior [5].

In humanistic psychology there is a final differentiation of assertive and aggressive behavior. Here assertiveness is understood as a complex formation in the self-structure, which is closely related to self-actualization, self-government need, preserving personal dignity and also sense of identity and internal consistency. Representatives of this scientific thought consider assertiveness as an integral part of self-acceptance that provides right introspection and adequate level of aspiration.

Representatives of these lines of research formed assertive human rights and also such manipulative attitudes that block these rights. Basic assertive rights are formulated in the following way: You have a right: 1) to make conclusions about your behavior, thoughts, emotions and take the consequences of them; 2) to give no explanations that would justify your behavior; 3) to decide, to what extent you are responsible for other people's problems; 4) to change your points of view; 5) to say "I don't understand you"; 6) to make mistakes and be responsible for their consequences; 7) to make inconsistent decisions; 8) to say "no", "I don't know"; 9) not to depend on other people's free will; 10) to say "I don't care" [8].

One distinguishes adequate self-esteem, self-respect, vigour, leadership, responsibility as important characteristics of assertiveness. Assertiveness manifests in the process of achieving goals. Accordingly, in one situation a person behaves assertively and in another one not. That is why there is no excessive assertiveness. Excessive assertiveness is aggressiveness. True assertiveness has such behavior characteristics as openness, frankness, honesty and expediency [7].

In the present article assertiveness is considered as a complex, multi-leveled character trait, which is characterized by adequate estimation of own emotional state and behavior, autonomy, independence upon external influences and assessments, an ability to control own feelings, thoughts, behavior, stand upon own rights and at the same time show respectful attitude towards other people.

The object of the present article is revealing ratio between assertiveness and personality factors, which are discovered with help of the The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) by Raymond Cattell and creating on the basis of qualitative measurement psychological characteristics of assertive and unassertive individuals.

The study involved 70 students of 3-4<sup>th</sup> courses of Biological department, Physical training department and Department of Postgraduate studies of Drohobych State Pedagogical University of Ivan Franko. "Questionnaire of aggressiveness components" by Olga Sannikova, Oleksandr Sannikov and Natalia Podoliak, and also Personality Questionnaire by Raymond Cattell were used as psychodiagnostic tools [3]. The following static methods were used in order to proceed the diagnostics results: quantitative (correlation) and qualitative (method of "ACes" and "profiles") measurements.

Analysis of correlations between qualitative indicators of assertiveness, which were distinguished with help of the unique technique "Questionnaire of aggressiveness components" and Questionnaire of Personal Factors by Raymond Cattell, showed many negative relations between these two kinds of phenomena. Parameters AcE, AcP, AcG are negatively related at the 1% level to a factor L, and AcK i AcCR are negatively related to it at the 5% level. All indicators of assertiveness are negatively related at the 1% level with a factor M and only AcCR is related on the 5% level. At the 1% level all components of assertiveness showed significant negative relation to the factor O and factor Q4. Such qualitative indicator of assertiveness as AcE showed negative relations at the 1% level with factor of a personality G, I, Q1. Parameters AcE and AcG with a factor Q II are significantly negatively related at the 1% level.

Some personality factors showed positive relations with assertiveness. The detailed analysis of relations showed that all parameters of assertiveness, except AcE, have significant positive relations with factors A and H. Such indexes of assertiveness as AcK, AcP and AcG have positive relations ( $p \geq 0,05$ ) with factor C3.

Just a single index AcK at the 5% level is positively related with a factor F. Parameters AcE, AcK and AcG have significant positive relations with factor Q2 at 1% level. Indexes AcP and AcG showed significant positive relation with factor Q I at the 1% and 5% levels respectively. Factors L, M, O, Q4 had negative relations with all qualitative indexes of assertiveness.

Thus, with help of the correlation analysis it was established that assertiveness has significant correlations with such personal patterns as H(+) courage, N(+) insight, C(+) self-strength, Q2(+) self-sufficiency, L(-) trustfulness, O(-) self-confidence, Q4(-) enervation/relaxation, QII(-) emotional stability, QIV(+). The low level of assertiveness is associated with H(-) timidity, N(-) naivete/innocence, C(-) self-weakness Q2(-), group-orientation L(+), suspicion, O(+) guiltiness/ guilt-proneness Q4(+), tension, QII(+) anxiety and Q IV(-) obedience.

Hence, with help of the correlation analysis it was established that assertiveness has significant correlations with such personal patterns as H(+) courage, N(+) insight, C(+) self-strength, Q2(+) self-significance, L(-) trustfulness, O(-) self-confidence, Q4(-) enervation/relaxation, QII(-) emotional stability, QIV(+).

In the table 1. significant coefficients of correlations between assertiveness indexes and personal factors (according to Raymond Cattell) are presented. Tabular analysis suggests that the low level of assertiveness is accompanied by H(-) timidity, N(-) naivete/innocence, C(-) self-weakness Q2(-), group-orientation L(+), suspicion, O(+) guilt-proneness/guiltiness Q4(+), tension, QII(+) anxiety and Q IV(-) obedience.

A differential psychological analysis was performed to reveal individual psychological characteristics of assertiveness and to create psychological portraits/profiles of individuals with diverse degree of its expression. This analysis lies firstly in grouping subjects according to a certain characteristic (in our case – according to a degree of assertiveness), secondly, in studying personality traits of representatives of the distinguished groups (compiling and describing personal psychological characteristics of representatives of the distinguished types of assertiveness).

**Table 1.** Significant coefficients of correlations between indexes of assertiveness and personality factors (by Raymond Cattell)

Factors 16-PF	Indexes of assertiveness				
	AcE	AcK	AcP	AcCR	AcGen
A		313**	222**	248**	316**
C		151*	172*		150*
F		150*			
G	-214**				
H		218**	193**	249**	201**
I	-277**				
L	-316**	-164*	-247**	-159*	-373**
M	-280**	-193**	-267**	-158*	-336**
O	-346**	-202**	-320**	-196**	-288**
Q1	-189**				
Q2	254**	214**			284**
Q4	-278**	-211**	-239**	-200**	-328**
QI			244**		176*
QII		-189**			-267**

Note: 1) conventional signs (legend) of personal factors according to the technique 16-PF: A affectothymia – sizothymia, C self-strength – self-weakness, F carelessness – concernment, G – strength – weakness “super-ego”, H social courage/boldness – social fear, I sensitivity – low sensitivity, L suspicion – trustfulness, M reverie, dreaminess – pragmatism, O guilt-proneness/guiltiness – self-assurance, Q1 radicalism – conservatism, Q2 self-sufficiency – group-orientation, Q4 tendency to frustration – absence of frustration, Q II extraversion – introversion, Q I anxiety – emotional stability.

**Table 2.** The most expressed factors of every profile according to the departure from mean value

Ranking	Group of individuals with different level of assertiveness	
	AssGen+ (max) Group	AssGen- (min) Group
1	C(+) self-strength,	O(+) guilt prone, self-blaming
2	E(+) dominance	C(-) self-weakness,
3	H(+) boldness	E(-) obedience
4	Q2(+) self-sufficiency	Q4(+) tension
5	O(-) self-assurance	N(-) naivety,
6.	I(-) firmness	Q2(-) group-orientation

Subjects with different manifestations of assertiveness were preselected according to the results of the QAC-technique (“Questionnaire assertiveness components”). In order to do this a special method of “ACes” was used and profiles of personal factors (by Raymond Cattell’s technique) of defined groups of subjects with maximum and

minimum intensity of the assertiveness general index were constructed.

For the further analysis the ranking of the most expressed factors of every profile according to the departure from mean value by descending meanings (refer to table 2.) was performed that allowed organizing the most expressed

factors and describing individual psychological characteristics of representatives of each group.

Therefore, representatives of the assertive group are characterized by the absence of neurasthenic symptoms, by calmness, they are empiric in confronting reality, perseverance. Such person doesn't care much about his/her own health, has stable interests, is able to control his/her feelings – C(+). These individuals are self-confident, independent-minded, are prone to ascetism, have own behavior patterns, don't acknowledge authorities (E+); they are characterized by social boldness, spontaneity, adventurousness, emotional liveliness, artistry, ability to stand criticism (H+). They are independent, capable to find unique ways to solve problems, make independent decisions, are not prone to come under influence of others, but at the same time they don't have to be dominant in relations with other people. One can't think that they don't like people, they just don't need their agreement and support (Q2+). Assertive individuals are funny, cheerful, self-confident, insensitive to criticism, vigorous, ambitious, relaxed – O(-).

A group of unassertive people is characterized first of all by guilt proneness O(+). It is manifested in the proneness to sadness, concernment, sensitivity, sensibility to criticism, trouble, tiredness, tension, hypochondria. Unassertive people are marked by high conformity, modesty, tactfulness, timidity, heed, kindness, obedience. Such personality is capable to defend his/her point of view, obediently follows the strongest, is inferior to others, is unconfident in his/her abilities, that is why is often dependant on others, self-blaming, obeys all duties. Such passiveness is a reason of all neurotic disorders – C(-).

Unassertive personality shirk responsibility, doesn't push the matter through, is characterized by emotional expansiveness, anxiety, tension – Q4(+). These individuals are obedient, soft, adaptive, make concessions, often seek for obsessive abidance by rules (E-); have a tendency to control their emotions and are prone to fixed-action pattern; they are socially attentive and careful, demonstrate self-respect and care about social image (Q3+). Unassertive people show social sensitivity, emotional instability, easily get upset. They are characterized by emotional lability, self-doubt, impatience, irritability, anxiety, volatility in interests, low degree of frustration, flexibility,

avoiding demands of reality, neurotic syndrome, temper. These people are group-oriented, require permanent support and approval of other people. They prefer living and working together with others not because they are very sociable, but rather because they aren't initiative and aren't able to choose own behavior pattern – Q2(-).

Thus, we have the following conclusions in the result of the carried out research:

1. The existence of significant correlations between indexes of assertiveness and indexes of a wide range of character traits (that were revealed with help of The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (or 16PF) by Raymond Cattell) was empirically proved. We can also conclude, that assertiveness is associated with such character traits as affectothymia, self-strength, social boldness, self-sufficiency, extroversion, pragmatism. This feature is accompanied by the absence of suspicion, guilt proneness, frustration, anxiety.

2. Groups of subjects with low and high degree of assertiveness were distinguished within the study sample applying the method of "aces" for the empirical study of individual psychological features of assertiveness.

3. Individual psychological features of assertiveness were revealed and psychological characteristics of assertive and unassertive personality were studied.

4. It was established that assertive individuals are characterized by self-assurance, self-interest, self-respect, self-trust, high self-esteem, self-confident, they are socially bold, initiative, self-contained, independent, soft, risk-prone, cool-headed, calm, persevering, stable. They are able to control themselves and their emotions, have their own behavior patterns, don't acknowledge authorities. They are marked by sociability, mental ballast, masculine features, adventurousness, cheerfulness, vigor, absence of neurasthenia, irritability.

5. Unassertive individuals are characterized by guilt-proneness, sadness, concernment, sensitivity, sensibility to criticism, trouble, tiredness, tension, hypochondria. They are marked by high conformity, modesty, tactfulness, timidity, heed, kindness, obedience, self-blaming, concentration on disadvantages, low self-esteem, dullness, constriction, anxiety, distrust, low need for cognition, externality, emotional lability, impulsivity, tension, group-orientation.

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**Санникова О.П., Подоляк Н.М. Эмпирический подход к исследованию характеристик асертивности**

**Аннотация.** В данной статье представлены результаты теоретико-эмпирического исследования индивидуально-психологических особенностей асертивности, представлен психологический портрет асертивных и неасертивных лиц.

Для реализации цели исследования использованы "Тест-опросник компонентов асертивности" (ТОКАС), разработанный О. П. Санниковой, А. И. Санниковым, Н. М. Подоляк и 16-PF личностный опросник Р. Кеттелла, статистические методы обработки данных: количественный (корреляционный) и качественный (метод "ассов" та "профилей") анализ результатов.

Выявлено, что асертивность соотносится с большим числом факторов личности (по Р. Кеттеллу), а именно, с такими свойствами личности как: аффектоимия, сила "Я", социальная смелость, самодостаточность, экстраверсия, практичность и сопровождается отсутствием подозрительности и склонности к чувству вины, фрустрированности, тревожности.

Установлено, что характеристиками асертивной личности являются: жизнерадостность, самоуверенность, нечувствительность к замечаниям и упрекам, энергичность, активность, расслабленность, спонтанность, авантюризм и тому подобное. Неасертивные лица проявляют эмоциональную чувствительность, эмоциональную неустойчивость, легко огорчаются и тому подобное.

**Ключевые слова:** *асертивность, асертивное поведение, асертивная личность, неасертивная личность*