

## LEVEL OF SELF-RESPECT AND ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS AND TEACHERS' EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCES

Romanowska-Tołłoczko Anna, Nowak Agata, Gnitecka Jolanta  
University School of Physical Education in Wrocław

**Abstract.** *Purpose:* determining of self-respect level and assertiveness of teachers. Verification of whether there is a relationship between the measured trait and the correlation of educational competence. *Material and methods:* the study used three tools: Polish adaptation of SES M.Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale, a questionnaire to determine the levels of assertiveness - P.Majewicz's Scale "I and others" and a questionnaire to examine the professional competence of teachers by A.Romanowska-Tołłoczko. The study examined 275 primary school teachers of different subjects. *Results:* after the statement of the research's results in the field of self-respect and assertiveness, it turns out that there is some regularity in relation to the level of the studied traits. People with high self-respect also receive higher scores assertive skills compared with those of average and low self-respect. This pattern is seen in all groups of teachers. *Conclusions:* although the observed differences are not great and statistically significant, they show some evidence of the occurrence trend of interdependence in a range of predispositions. Moreover, a positive correlation between the level of self-respect and assertiveness and parental perception of their competence was noted.

**Keywords:** teachers, assertiveness, self-respect, sense of self-worth, educational competences.

### Introduction

Assertiveness and self-respect are predictors of job performance among teaching predispositions, especially in terms of educational impact. Self-respect and the ability to behave assertively enable teacher to create partnerships with students [1, 2], allow to cope with difficult situations, allow the use of the negotiating strategy, based on effective communication [3].

Assertiveness is strongly related with self-respect, constituting the core of self-image and an important component of consciousness [4]. The conviction of respect is fundamental to man, because self-respect affects the well-being and quality of activities undertaken [5]. Association of self-assertiveness is seen by many psychologists who argue that assertiveness is closely connected with the sense of personal dignity [6].

Assertive attitude of looking at oneself and other people as value demands respect and proper protection of the dignity and rights. Assertive attitude is striving to ensure that relationships with people are based on trust and truthfulness [7]. Assertive behavior represents a direct, honest and firm expression of ones feeling towards others, as well as opinions or desires in a way that respects the feelings, attitudes, opinions and desires of the other person. It differs from aggressive behavior, as it uses personal rights without violating the rights of others. It also differs from the submissive behavior, as it presupposes acting in accordance with one's own interests and firm defense of oneself and one's rights [8].

There is also an approach to assertiveness, which goes beyond the category of learned behaviors, recognizing that assertiveness is closely related to self-acceptance. Assertive man strives to be true to himself. He is honest, his behavior is appropriate to situation and everything in order that gives him sense of personal dignity. Thus, the strength and security of an assertive person is rooted in respect for oneself. This respect enables individuals to formulate their own needs and expectations of other people, as well as the conviction of the need to build respect the rights of others to express their needs [9].

Self-respect is an attitude towards oneself, ones qualities, capabilities, abilities and drawbacks, which is a component of emotional self-image, understood as a group of diverse judgments and opinions that a person applies to himself (herself). They relate to physical, mental, and social characteristics of a human being. Related concepts that are closely linked with self-respect are self-esteem and self-acceptance [10].

Self-respect is determined by the manner and level of self-evaluation in respect to those values which person considers the most important. Depending on the values, self-respect may be positive or negative. The value of self-respect depends on how far the actual self-image is consistent with the image of the ideal, because the level can be defined as high or low self. The amount of self-respect depends on whether the entity assesses its own value and capabilities as large or as small.

Due to the criterion of sustainability, we are talking about stable and unstable self-respect. Self-assessment is a relatively stable permanent system of opinions and judgments of a person, which don't change too rapidly. People with self-respect instability are characterized by frequent changes of views about themselves [11]. On the basis of the criterion of consistency and accuracy of self-assessment of the actual capabilities of the unit stands out adequate and inadequate self-respect. When man properly evaluates your options, then his self-respect is adequate, and it involves taking actions that are appropriate to its own conditions. Accurate self-assessment is therefore one of the conditions for the effective functioning of the human being and is a key factor in its proper adaptation to the environment. Inadequate self-respect takes place when not responding the actual capabilities of the individual and may be understated or

overstated. Taking into account the certainty of opinion about the man himself we can speak of firm and threatened self-assessment [4].

**Purpose**

The aim of the study was to determine the levels of self-respect and assertiveness of teachers and determine whether there is a relationship between the studied traits. It was attempted to demonstrate the differences in a range of aptitudes in teachers of different subjects, as well as to determine whether there is a correlation between self-respect and assertiveness and the perception of their educational competences.

**Material and methods**

The study was conducted among primary school teachers in Wrocław. Only questionnaires filled by women were qualified for the analysis, as among the respondents, men constituted a small percentage. Four subgroups were created in accordance to specificity of the subjects taught. The study examined 61 physical education teachers, 67 teachers of early childhood education, 72 teachers of humanities and 75 science teachers.

The study used three tools: Polish adaptation of SES M.Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale [12], a questionnaire to determine the levels of assertiveness - P.Majewicz's Scale "I and others" [13] and authorial questionnaire by A. Romanowska-Tołłoczko to study teachers' professional levels.

**Results**

According to by H. Sęk [14], assertive behavior can be divided into the following categories:

- Expressive behavior (expressing desires and feelings of positive and negative)
- Interpersonal behavior (communication, defense of their position, denying, requests for help)
- Task behavior (asserting one's rights, overcoming obstacles).

In a study of assertive skills of teachers, similar results across all treatment groups were obtained. Although differences in the number of persons having a certain level of assertiveness were small, it was noted that a slightly lower level of assertiveness skills were typical for early childhood education teachers and physical education. The highest average raw results were found in the humanities teachers, among whom there were many people with high levels of assertiveness (table 1).

Table 1

*Assertiveness of teachers*

Study group	Assertiveness level			Arithmetic mean of the raw results
	LOW %	AVERAGE %	HIGH %	
teachers of early childhood education	20,5	61,2	18,3	63,16
teachers of humanities	14,7	51,1	34,2	66,11
teachers of science	16,5	58,0	25,5	65,59
physical education teachers	19,1	57,7	23,2	64,11

In terms of self-respect, there were more differences between the two groups of teachers. Teachers of science subjects were at the top, then the humanities. Slightly lower level of self respect was manifested by physical education teachers, and the lowest level of the selected features are characterized by early childhood education teachers (table 2).

Table 2

*Self-respect of teachers*

Study group	Self-respect level			Arithmetic mean of the raw results
	LOW %	AVERAGE %	HIGH %	
teachers of early childhood education	23,2	55,3	21,5	28,34
teachers of humanities	13,4	56,8	29,8	31,35
teachers of science	12,5	57,1	30,4	32,14
physical education teachers	17,2	55,5	27,3	29,82

After the statement of the results of research in the field of self-respect and assertiveness, it turns out that there is some regularity in relation to the level of the studied traits. People with high self-respect also receive higher scores assertive skills compared to those of average and low self-esteem. This pattern is seen in all groups of teachers (table 3). Although the observed differences are small and not statistically significant, they show some evidence of the occurrence trend of interdependence in a range of predispositions.

Table 3

*Level of self-respect and arithmetic mean of raw results in terms of assertiveness in the studied groups of teachers*

Study group	Self-respect level	Arithmetic mean of raw results in assertiveness
teachers of early childhood education	HIGH	67.20
	AVERAGE	62.15
	LOW	60.13
	HIGH	68.90

teachers of humanities	AVARAGE	66.57
	LOW	62.87
teachers of science	HIGH	68.67
	AVARAGE	65.12
	LOW	63.00
physical education teachers	HIGH	67.90
	AVARAGE	62.57
	LOW	61.87

The next step of the research was to determine whether there is a link between perception of their educational competences and the level of self-respect and assertiveness. Positive correlation was found in a range of properties in cases of almost all teachers (Table 4). Persons describing themselves as more educationally competent and better coping with interpersonal situations with students, had higher self-respect and assertiveness skills.

Table 4

*Levels of educational competences declared by teachers and arithmetic mean of the results in terms of strict self-respect and assertiveness*

Levels of educational competences	Self-respect - arithmetic mean	Assertiveness - arithmetic mean
HIGH	31.28	67.82
AVARAGE	29.15	64.23
LOW	27.36	61.14

### Discussion

Many researchers of teachers' competences deal with assertiveness issues and recognize it as a necessary skill in teaching [15]. It was found that besides having an impact on relationships with students, assertiveness is also important regulator. It plays an important role in mechanism regulating responses to the strain resulting from teaching, and its relationship to health and burnout was demonstrated [3].

The results obtained in the study are confirmed in the literature signaled a positive correlation of assertiveness with self-respect and self-acceptance of a person [16]. It was found that the tendency to manifest assertive behavior increases with the level of self-respect and self-acceptance, and the intensity of the feeling of competence in collaboration with others. But decreases with increasing docility and submission [13]. Also determined the relationship assertiveness of the so-called "self-confidence" [17], because it is usually a confident person with high self-respect and belief in their own abilities

The way in which a man sees oneself, has a direct impact on self-respect, which has a significant impact on its function [18]. Assertive behavior strengthens ability to self-respect and promotes maintaining normal interpersonal relationships, which are very important in the teaching profession [19]. It is necessary to remember that assertiveness is not innate. It results from learning in a variety of situations in a particular way of experiencing and reacting. It contains a lot of skills to be developed during the course of students' interpersonal skills education teacher education institutions [9], as well as organize workshops and assertiveness training for teachers who are already working.

Through the development of these skills, you can also help a person to build a positive and stable self-image, which affects not only the professional success but determines the quality of all areas of life [20]. Enhancing self-respect in this occupational group is indeed essential, because the teaching profession does not enjoy social recognition, so be sure to allow the widest possible involvement of teachers in training programs and psycho-social skills.

### Conclusions

Based on the survey it was found that there are different levels of assertiveness and self-respect among separate groups of teachers depending on the subject taught. Early childhood education teachers and physical education are characterized by lower levels of the studied traits, compared to teachers of other subjects. Furthermore, in each group a positive correlation between the defined dispositions was noted, it can be assumed that the resulting distribution of results is due to several reasons and, between the levels of the studied traits and level of educational competences. One of the reasons is probably the specificity of the subject taught, which largely determines the kind of relationship with the students, which requires the teacher to a particular type of conduct. Interpersonal behavior in professional situations may favor or hinder the development of assertive skills, which is also reflected in the other life situations. Type the subject taught also locates the subject at the specified position in the unwritten hierarchy of school subjects. Physical education and early childhood education occupy the lower levels of the hierarchy, which may also have some effect on the self-respect of teachers in these subjects. However, this hypothesis should be further verified in the course more in-depth and detailed research.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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#### Information about the authors:

**Romanowska-Tolłoczko Anna:** <http://orcid.org/000-0003-2236-7519>; Anna.Romanowska-Tolłoczko@awf.wroc.pl; University School of Physical Education in Wrocław; Paderewskiego 35, 51-612 Wrocław, Poland.

**Nowak Agata:** <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7924-0944>; Agata.Nowak@awf.wroc.pl; University School of Physical Education in Wrocław; Paderewskiego 35, 51-612 Wrocław, Poland.

**Gnitecka Jolanta:** <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5855-1057>; Jolanta.Gnitecka@awf.wroc.pl; University School of Physical Education in Wrocław; Paderewskiego 35, 51-612 Wrocław, Poland.

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