

**Stoykov Anton**

*PhD, Associate Professor of the  
Social Activities Department of the Faculty of Medicine  
Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria*

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## ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIVE TOLERANCE IN FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS

**Summary.** *This article deals with communicative tolerance in the future social workers as well as the forms and methods for its development as part of the university training programme. Presented are results from a study on communicative tolerance in Social Work students. Based on these results, an analysis was carried out on its development in these students within the complex of essential personal qualities for a career in social work. Justified is the role of communicative tolerance for the success of their future professional interaction.*

**Key words:** *communicative tolerance, professional interaction, social work.*

**Introduction.** These days, more and more attention is paid to tolerance as a mandatory component of every human interaction, including communicative interaction. In this connection, one of the most important issues which our educational system needs to deal with, is the creation of favorable conditions for the formation of communicative tolerance in the future university graduates and most of all in the students seeking a career in a profession with a distinct focus on communication, among which is the social worker profession. The specifics of social work suggest that the individual's personal characteristics in combination with his/her professional qualities, are a major tool for generating influence on the Client.

The university training programme in social work in its current form is marked by the absence of a comprehensive system for the development of students' communicative tolerance. As a result of this, in their future career they very often face difficulties related with their professional self-realization, their successful adaptation to the job requirements and the conditions of their work environment. This fact triggers the need of elaborating a similar system focused mainly towards development of the essential career-related personal qualities in the future social workers, among which is their communicative tolerance.

**Materials/Target Group and Methods.** Tolerance is an important requirement for the effectiveness of the professional communication involved in social work. Tolerance as part of the communication process suggests knowing and respecting the other person's opinion regardless of one's own agreement

or disagreement with it. Researchers define communicative tolerance as the tolerance manifested by the individual in the process of communication towards one's interlocutors.

For V. V. Boyko (V. Boyko 1996 by K. Yovcheva 2011) [1] communicative tolerance is determined by certain substructures of personality. These are:

- The intellectual substructure: it conveys the paradigm (model, type, style) of the individual's mental activity, i.e. one's own principles of understanding the reality, stereotypes typical for him/her and related with comprehension of issues, ideas, decision-making;
- The value-oriented substructure: it encompasses the individual's leading worldview ideals, his/her close and distant life goals, his/her assessment of each occurring event;
- The ethical substructure — it is an expression of the moral norms adopted by the individual: his/her understanding of what is good and bad, justice and injustice, sense of responsibility, etc.;
- The aesthetical substructure — it is related with the preferences, tastes, feelings and peculiarities of the individual's perception of what is beautiful and ugly, noble and mean, comic and tragic;
- The emotional substructure — it demonstrates the predominant spectrum occupied by the individual: joy or sadness, pessimism or optimism, goodwill or aggression;
- The sensory (sensual) substructure — it encompasses the characteristics of sensory perception of the world at the level of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and motor sensations;

- The energy-dynamic substructure — it reflects the individual's energy properties, i.e. the quality and strength of one's energy field;
- The algorithmic substructure — it combines a large number of different qualities which are however united by one, i.e. the uniformity of their reproducibility. These include habits, skills and various rituals, including also such related to household, family and religion;
- The characterological substructure — it combines the sustainable, type — forming personality traits which are congenital or acquired as a result of upbringing, examples and imitation;
- The functional substructure — it includes different systems for securing and maintaining the individual's comfort, i.e. most of all the individual's needs and his/her subsequent preferences and desires.

According to V. V. Boyko, the substructures above further determine the different levels of communicative tolerance, i.e.:

- The level of situational communicative tolerance — it is manifested in the individual's attitude towards a particular person in a particular situation;
- The level of typological communicative tolerance — it is manifested in the individual's attitude towards a group or collective personalities, e.g. towards the representatives of a particular nation, social group or profession;
- The level of professional communicative tolerance — it includes the individual's attitude towards collective personalities whom one meets in the process of one's professional communication. In this sense, the extra energy accumulated by emotions is mainly seen in a work environment;
- The level of general communicative tolerance — at this level distinguished are trends in the individual's attitude towards people in general, trends determined by the individual's life experience, trends determined by the individual's expectations, by the individual's character traits, his/her moral principles or mental stability. To a large extent, the general communicative tolerance is dependent on its other forms, i.e. — the situational, the typological and the professional communicative tolerance.

The social worker's tolerant communication features bigger responsibility with regard to the expected result. For this fact, the focus on collaborative communication should be mandatory in this process.

Object of our interest is the level of communicative tolerance in the Social Work students as one of their most essential career-related personal and professional characteristics. To determine its level, we have used The Methods for Diagnosing Communication Tolerance by V. V. Boyko [2]. The questionnaire consists of 45 questions and statements, grouped into nine grading scales:

1. Rejecting or not understanding the other person's individuality;
2. Seeing oneself as a standard in the evaluation of other people;
3. Categoricity or conservatism in the evaluation of other people;
4. Inability to hide or suppress unpleasant impressions from the poor communication skills of other people;
5. Tendency to change or re-educate a partner;
6. Tendency to an authoritarian style of communication;
7. Inability to forgive other people's mistakes;
8. Intolerance towards the other person's discomfort (sickness, tiredness, bad mood);
9. Ability to adapt for interaction with the other people.

The respondents were expected to point out to what degree these statements apply to them using 0–3 scoring system. The higher score reveals the respondent's higher level of intolerance towards the surrounding environment and respectively a low level of his/her communicative tolerance. In addition to that, the total score under each grading scale allows drawing of conclusions about the manifestations of communicative tolerance on side of the relevant respondent.

Forty-seven full-time Social Work students (first and second year) with the Faculty of Medicine at Traкия University, (29 female and 18 male), took part in the experiment.

The assessment of their level of communicative tolerance was made on the basis of three of its levels: high, moderate and low. Processing of the results was based on the statement of Nikolay Shevandrin [3] who points out that finding of low, moderate and high indicators requires:

1. Determining the maximum possible significance of the score estimation. In our case this is 135 points;
  2. Determining the moderate possible significance of the score estimate which is 67.5 in our case;
  3. Determining the standard deviation (for this purpose the maximum significance of the score estimation is divided into 4), i.e. 33.75 points;
  4. Determining the interval endpoints referring to the high, moderate and low score estimations:
- **High** level of communicative tolerance: within the interval [0–33.75] points;
  - **Moderate** level of communicative tolerance: within the interval [33.75–101.25] points;
  - **Low** level of communicative tolerance: within the interval [101.25–135] points;

### Results and Discussion

Upon assessing the general communicative tolerance of the students participating in the experiment, the following results were obtained:

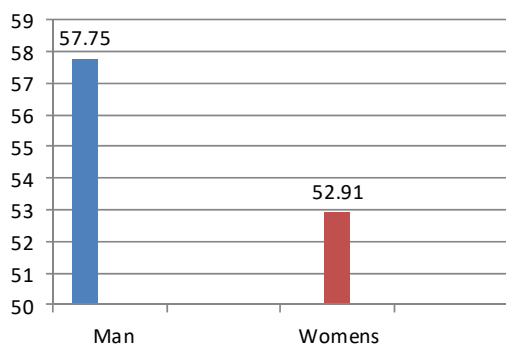


Diagram 1. Level of the General Communicative Tolerance

These results reveal that the major part of the students who took part in the experiment have a moderate level of general communicative tolerance, respectively 57.75 points for men and 52.91 for women. This difference could be regarded as insignificant. The general communicative tolerance may be manifested as:

1. **Situational communicative tolerance:** manifested in the individual’s attitude towards a particular person, e.g. client, workmate, close relative, accidental acquaintance.
2. **Professional communicative tolerance:** it is manifested in the individual’s attitude towards collective personalities whom one meets in the process of one’s professional communication.
3. **Typological communicative tolerance:** it is manifested in the individual’s attitude towards a group or collective personalities, e.g. towards the representatives of a particular profession, ethnic group or nationality.

In the further in-depth analysis of the results from the experiment focused on distribution of the respondents based on their level of communicative tolerance, the following results are obtained:

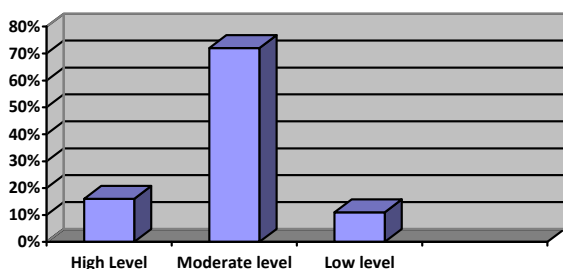


Diagram 2. Distribution of the respondents based on their level of communicative tolerance (men)

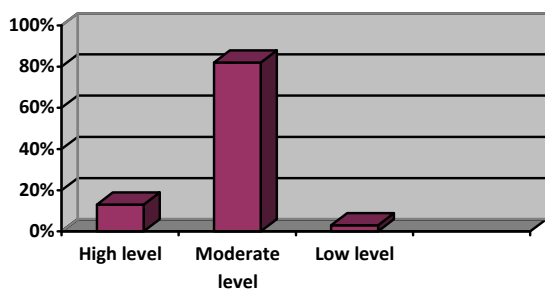


Diagram 3. Distribution of the respondents based on their level of communicative tolerance (women)

The results show that in the group of male students the number of students manifesting a moderate level of communicative tolerance is the highest (72 %). 16 % of them have demonstrated a high level of communicative tolerance, and 11 % of them-low level of communicative tolerance.

In the group of female students, moderate level of communicative tolerance is manifested by 82 % of the students, high level -by 13 % of them, and low level is demonstrated by only 3 % of the students.

The results based on the analysis of each of the indicators in the nine grading scales are as follows:

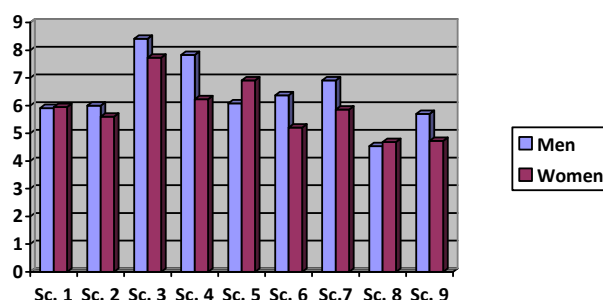


Diagram 4. Distribution of the results by grading scales

The analysis of the results based on the first grading scale (non-acceptance or not understanding the other person’s individuality), results in the conclusion that when it comes to acceptance of the other person’s individuality, the students of both sexes manifest a high level of tolerance with regard to the personal characteristics of their interlocutors, their preferences and interests.

The results based on the second grading scale (seeing oneself as a standard when evaluating other people) give us grounds to assume that most of the students are unlikely to accept themselves as a set standard in the evaluation of others).

The third scale (categoricity or conservatism when evaluating other people) is linked to two very important aspects from the evaluation of the one’s partner in the process of communication, i.e. its categoricity and conservatism. Categoricity of the assessment is directly related with its accuracy and suggests confidence in the process of evaluating other people. Conservatism, on the other hand, in the evaluation of others may be as a result of already established durable stereotypes with regard to the value models which the individual carries and might compromise its accuracy. The results based on this scale are the highest in comparison with the other scales for the students of both sexes.

The inability to hide or suppress the unpleasant impressions from the poor communication skills of other people would result in the appearance of serious barriers in the process of the future professional interaction of the students who took part in the experiment. This scale reveals results which are slightly higher than the average, and higher for the male students.

These results are an indicator for the need of a targeted activity aimed at improving the level of self-control in students in the process of their interpersonal communication.

The results based on the fifth grading scale (Tendency to change one's partner or tendency to re-educate him/her) reveal a moderate level of communicative tolerance manifested by the students participating in the experiment whereas the lower score in male students means higher level of tolerance compared to female students.

With regard to grading scale 6 (Tendency to an authoritarian style of communication), the results reveal a comparatively low level of tendency towards authoritarian style of communication. In this case, the male students tend to be slightly more disposed to it.

The ability to forgive other people's mistakes is a precondition for building an atmosphere of trust in social worker's process of professional communication. The results based on this scale show a moderate degree of development of this skill in the students of both sexes, its score being higher in male students which means lower level of development.

Intolerance towards the other person's discomfort would be a serious impediment in the establishment and most of all further maintenance of a contact with the client with the purpose of solving the difficult life situation he/she is experiencing. This component of tolerance is of particular importance in the social worker's professional communication since in his/

her work he /she interacts with representatives of various social, professional, ethnical, etc. strata of the population. The results based on this scale indicate a high level of tolerance. At the same time these results have the lowest values compared to the other grading scales which means that they are most well expressed in the persons studied.

Under the "adaptive ability for interaction with other people" scale, the students of both sexes show results confirming that these skills which are a mandatory personal quality of the Social Worker aiming to achieve a successful and effective interaction with his/her colleagues and clients in his/her professional activities are very well developed.

**Conclusion.** With a view to the successful career of the Social Work students, mastering of professional knowledge, skills and habits is required, but also formation of particular personal qualities and characteristics among which communicative tolerance stands out as highly important. Its high level of development is required for the successful professional interaction. Improving the level of communicative tolerance results in development of the general communicative competence. The results from the study carried out referring to the level of development of communicative tolerance in the future social workers prove the need of incorporating into the university training programmes a complex of training forms with an active impact on the communicative, personality, emotional, reflexive and behavioral aspects of the individual.

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