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# The Influence of Communication Style on the Reactivity to Social Changes at Mental Deficiencies Preadolescents

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## Abstract

It is well known that each of us has a unique style of communication that facilitates the process of social adaptation. In time, the communication style will become a personality's feature. Taking in consideration the main features of mental deficiency's personality, this paper tried to reveal the influence that the social communication style has on the way the pupils with mental deficiencies react to social changes.

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## 1. Theoretical background

It is well known that what defines us as humans is the ability to communicate. This ability is essential for changing information, for acquiring knowledge, skills, for establishing personal relationships.

In time, as the experience in communication is grown, each person will develop a unique style of communication, who will define that person especially in area of level of social communication performances (Albu, 2008).

The **communication style represents** the ensemble of characteristics a person possesses, and it all is reflected in the communicative act. By style we mean: specific ways of receiving / decoding the message; personal qualities in processing / interpreting messages; specific ways of expressing the response, and personal particularities of feedback. It is fundamentally determined by three elements: 1. **the person's attitudinal process** as a constant report to others and themselves, 2. **models of learned communication tools:** assertive, non-assertive, aggressive (with its passive-aggressive variant), and manipulative, 3. **temperamental constitution** as

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type of nerve cell reactivity. There are four communication styles: a) the **Non – assertive style** is characterized by the tendency to hide, or to run away, rather than face people. It can manifest itself through: excessive kindness and conciliation, the tendency to postpone the decision-making process, handing over to another people the right to decide, and a morbid fear of being judged by others, as intense anger is felt at the prospect of a possible failure - individuals prefer avoidance and obedience to others' decisions; b) **The aggressive style** is characterized by the tendency to be always present; by the tendency to have the last word, to win at any cost, even if it causes damage or grief to others; c) **The manipulative style** is characterized by the preference for a backstage role, by the tendency to wait until the opportune moment has come to light, and to shine then, and by tendency to look for any hidden intentions behind others' statements; d) **The assertive style** is characterized by: the ability of self-assertion, an honest and direct approach in personal speech; the abilities of providing straightforward opinions without aggression and without harm to others, pursuing their interests without violating others' needs. (Urea, 2012)

Each communication style will reflect the personality features. These characteristics will be reflected in specific behavioural patterns as responses to environmental changes. These specific behavioural patterns as responses to environmental changes are known as "the reactivity to changes" (Chelcea, 2003)

There are three type of reactivity to changes: a) the **traditionalist type** is characterized by the constant disturb of the environmental changes, by constant design of precise rules which give security and burden his life; b) **the libertine type** is characterized by the need of changing the environment by short term relationships, by constant searching for personal independency; c) **the realist type** is characterized by the acceptance of the environmental changes, even they are painful; by justifying of the environmental changes in relation to the content of those; by considering the process of adaptation as a mark of environmental changes.

Starting with 2004, there were performed a series of studies focus on characteristics of reactivity to environmental changes at normal preadolescents and at preadolescents with mental deficiencies (Urea, 2010)

## 2. Research investigation

The experts from special education have revealed the principal characteristics of personality at person with mental deficiency: specific heterocronie, genetic viscosity, pathological inertia, rigidity, fragility of verbal conduct, fragility of personality. These characteristics put the finger on all the personality's traits and all the behavioural manifestation at persons with mental deficiency, even the educational influences shape the intensity of those influences. The situation has raised the following question: how the, at mental deficiencies preadolescents, communication style as a feature of personality influences their reactivity to environmental changes?

To answer this question, we performed psychological research aiming at revealing, at pupils with mental deficiencies, the influence the communication style on the way they react to environmental changes; the wider goal was to thus design special strategies that will determine at pupils with mental deficiencies better school performance, will reduce their failure in social environment.

In our research we had two major objectives: investigation, of mental deficiencies preadolescent's communication style; investigation of the preadolescent's type of reactivity to environmental changes. We started from the following hypothesis: *taking into consideration the mental deficiencies personality's features, we assume that we will find different, at preadolescents with mental deficiencies, specific influences of communication style upon the way they react to environment changes.*

Our research had an initial testing procedure on 15 preadolescents with mental deficiencies and the Cronbach Alpha index ( $\alpha = .627$ ) obtained allowed us to proceed to an extended psychological research that had three stages: a) investigation of mental deficiencies preadolescent's communication style; b) investigation of mental deficiencies preadolescent's reactivity to environmental changes.

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