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Rozprawa doktorska napisana pod kierunkiem

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Summary

Methodological awareness (MA) is one of the most salient determinants of research skills of psychologists (see Brzeziński, 1978, 1991, 2012, 2013, 2016; Spendel, 2005). However, it is a rare object of interest in scientific research. In particular, we know very little about the determinants of methodological competence and its development.

The previous studies indicated the possibility of identifying some correlates of methodological competences in terms of personality traits and cognitive preferences (Flakus, 2014a, 2014b). Also, they suggested that MA is related to intuitive and affective processes. Indeed, the hypothesized role of implicit processes in the development of methodological awareness is justified considering the epistemological reflection on scientific development (see Klawiter, 1989, 1991).

This paper aimed to analyze the relationships between selected dispositional (i.e., cognitive preferences and personality traits) and regulatory (i.e., attitudes towards research and self-efficacy) psychological features, explicit and implicit processes, and the methodological competences. This goal was achieved by carrying out two studies.

The first study was cross-sectional. It was conducted on a group of 224 people characterized by the different levels of expertise in conducting research. The sample included students of the last two years of studies, PhD candidates, and academic staff. The test examining methodological competences was carrying out in one of two variants – implicit and explicit. In the first version of the procedure, the respondents were asked to evaluate certain aspects of the research procedure applied in a fictional scientific study. In the second version, they were asked not only to assess the methodology but also to make a reference to a precise methodological rule.

The results of the study showed differences in the level of methodological awareness activated based on implicit and explicit processes. All participants obtained a higher level of MA in

implicit conditions than in explicit conditions. Also, in explicit conditions, students made more accurate methodological decisions than students who were asked to evaluate the research procedure. A different effect was observed concerning older researchers. When they were asked to justify their decision, they made less correct assessments than the researchers who were only supposed to evaluate the correctness of the study. The results also indicated that the preferences of intuition, thinking and perception, and intellect/openness are positive predictors of methodological awareness. Also, the analysis of the regression showed the suppression effect, suggesting the mutual enhancement of the effects of intuition, perception, and thinking for methodological awareness in implicit conditions.

The second study was a four-stage longitudinal study. The sample consisted of 130 students starting their studies in psychology. The first stage of the study took place during the first semester, before the formal methodological and statistical education, while the next three stages took place after certain courses related to conducting scientific research. Finally, 123 students participating in stages 1-3 were qualified for further analysis (including 80 participants who also took part in the last stage of the study).

The results of the study indicated changes in the level of methodological awareness. Both explicit and implicit competences increased in the course of formal education. Consistent with the first study, in explicit conditions, the accuracy of methodological decisions made by students increased. However, this effect was absent in the early stages of education. The results also suggested that preferences of intuition and thinking, intellect/openness, and a more positive attitude towards research are related to a higher level of methodological awareness.

Conclusions from the research seem to be of great importance from the educational point of view and might be beneficial while planning the teaching programs implemented regarding the academic courses focused on the development of research skills. In particular, they seem to emphasize the need to balance the teaching methods focused on declarative knowledge development with strategies aimed at forming more internalized embodiments of methodological skills.