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## FEATURES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SELF-ATTITUDE IN THE CONTEXT OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**A b s t r a c t.** The article analyzes peculiarities of students' self-attitudes in the context of self-determination of their personal development. Self-attitude is defined as a poly-modal emotional-estimative system based on the principle of a dynamic hierarchy and acting as one of the structural units of a person's dispositional core and a component of the structure of self-consciousness. Self-attitude expresses peculiarities of an individual's attitude to oneself and provides centring of one's inner space and formation of the semantic vector of one's life path. Positive self-attitude along with personal aspirations and prospects, personal autonomy, self-efficacy is an indicator of a self-determined individual. The used questionnaire on self-attitude developed by V.V. Stolin, S.R. Pantileev allowed us to identify three levels of self-attitude according to the degree of its generalization: general self-attitude; self-attitude differentiated by self-regard, auto-sympathy, self-interest and expected attitude of others; the level of concrete actions (readiness for them) regarding Self. The analyses of students' self-attitude has shown that the respondents are characterized by high indicators of general self-attitude and high and average lower-level indicators. The students with high and low self-determination have different expressiveness of the self-attitude components.

**Key words:** personality; self-determination; self-attitude; general self-attitude; auto-sympathy; self-respect; self-interest; self-assurance; self-blaming; self-understanding.

## 1. RELEVANCE OF STUDIES

One of the most important determinants of an individual's self-development is his/her attitude towards him/herself. Self-attitude as a personal characteristic is closely connected with life goals and activities, value orientations, with a vector of personal and professional development, and is the most important factor in the formation and stabilization of a personality unity.<sup>1</sup> The concept on Self and self-attitude is traditionally understood as global self-esteem,<sup>2</sup> integrative core self-assessment,<sup>3</sup> self-confidence.<sup>4</sup> Self-attitude is also understood as one of the types of social attitudes, which has a three-component structure, including cognitive, emotional, and connotative components, and performs certain functions.<sup>5</sup> These functions are the following: the function of a "mirror" (self-image); self expression and self-realization; preservation of internal stability and continuity of Self; self-regulation and self-control; psychological protection and intra-communications. According to V.V. Stolin, three emotional dimensions lay at the basis of the self-attitude macrostructure: self-regard, auto-sympathy, proximity to oneself (self-interest), which are integrated into the general feeling of an individual's positive or negative attitude towards him/herself. Support of stable self-attitude "provides a permanent strategy in relation to oneself, manifested both in external, social-objective activity, and in intra-personal activity".<sup>6</sup> The mechanisms of self-attitude protection acts in such a way, according to the researcher. Considering self-attitude as an emotional and evaluation system, S.R. Pantileev defined a dynamic hierarchy as a basic principle of its structuring. The dynamic hierarchy means that negative or positive emotional attitude can act as a core of the system, occupying a leading place in the hierarchy of other

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<sup>1</sup> L. SERDIUK, *Personal Modus of Future Specialists' Self-Realization*, "Social Welfare: Interdisciplinary Approach" (2014), 4(1), p. 71–80.

<sup>2</sup> M. ROSENBERG, *Society and the adolescent Self-image*, Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1965.

<sup>3</sup> T.A. JUDGE, *Core Self-Evaluations and Work Success*, "Current Directions in Psychological Science" 18(2009), nr 1, p. 58–62.

<sup>4</sup> S. KRAUSE, M.D. BACK, B. EGLOFF, S.C. SCHUKLE, *Predicting Self-Confident Behaviour with Implicit and Explicit Self Esteem Measures*, "European Journal of Personality" 30(2016), nr 6; p. 648–662.

<sup>5</sup> N.I. SARDZHVELADZE, *Samootnoshenie lichnosti*, in: *Psihologija samosoznanija*, red. D.Ja. Rajgorodskij, Samara: Izdatel'skij Dom «BAHRAH-M» 2007, p. 174–207.

<sup>6</sup> A.A. BODALEV, V.V. STOLIN, V.S. AVANESOV, *Obshhaja psihodiagnostika*, SPb.: Izd-vo «Rech'» 2000, p. 361.

aspects of self-attitude, and actually defining the content and force of generalized stable self-attitude.<sup>7</sup>

Modern psychological studies define self-attitude as a poly-modal emotional-estimative system, having a special place in the system of personal attitudes. It is “one of the components of an individual’s subjective core and the structure of one’s consciousness, it expresses peculiarities of an individual’s attitude to him/herself and provides centring of one’s inner space and formation of the semantic vector of one’s life path.”<sup>8</sup> A.M. Kolyshko emphasizes that self-attitude can be understood as a measure of awareness and quality of emotional and value acceptance of themselves as initiative and responsible actors of social activity.<sup>9</sup> DeMarree K.G., Petty R.E., Strunk D.R. consider self-attitude as “accessibility of self-esteem” and includes in its model self-esteem certainty, self-concept clarity, evaluative extremity<sup>10</sup>. P.V. Zunick, J.D. Teeny, R.H. Fazio names attitudes associated with the definition of Self, with self-attitude, as self-defining attitudes. Their studies shows that such self-attitude tends to be “extreme, positive, and unambivalent,” spontaneously defended by a person and associated with his/her Self.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the positive self-attitude along with personal aspirations and prospects, autonomy, self-efficacy acts as indicators of a self-determined individual. By the definition of L.Z. Serdyuk, self-attitude “determines largely assessment of the reality, formation of ideas about the world and oneself, predicts an individual’s social effectiveness and attitude of others, regulates interpersonal relations, goal formulation and achievement, affects the processes of self-actualization, self-development, self-fulfilment and, together with the social status and attitudes to the outside world, creates the system ‘an individual – social world’ becoming one of the structural units of the dispositional core.”<sup>12</sup> Self-attitude is a specific mechanism of advanced regulation of life. At the same time, inadequate self-attitude influence negatively an individual’s socialization and psychological

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<sup>7</sup> S.R. PANTILEEV, *Samootnoshenie kak ehmocional'no-ocenochnaya sistema*, M.: Izd-vo MGU 1991.

<sup>8</sup> N. MACEVKO, *Fenomen samostavlenija v psihologii*, “Psychologija osobystosti” 2010, nr 1, p. 210.

<sup>9</sup> A.M. KOLYSHKO, *Psihologija samootnoshenija*, Grodno: GrGU 2004.

<sup>10</sup> K.G. DEMARREE, R.E. PETTY, D.R. STRUNK, *Self-Esteem Accessibility as Attitude Strength: On the Durability and Impactfulness of Accessible Self-Esteem*, “Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin” 36(2010), nr 5, p. 628–641.

<sup>11</sup> P.V. ZUNICK, J.D. TEENY, R.H. FAZIO, *Are Some Attitudes More Self-Defining Than Others? Assessing Self-Related Attitude Functions and Their Consequences*, “Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin” 43(2017), nr 8, p. 1136–1149.

<sup>12</sup> L.Z. SERDIUK, *Psykholohiia motyvatsii uchinnia maibutnikh fakhivtsiv: systemnosynerhetychnyi pidkhid*, K.: Universytet «Ukraina» 2012, p. 123.

development, decreases self-esteem, leads to uncertainty in oneself, appearance of negative personal traits, an inferiority complex, abandonment of life perspectives.<sup>13</sup> Pointing out that any change in self-attitude is experienced as a threat to one's identity and is associated with intra-personal conflicts, L.Z. Serdyuk outlines various aspects of self-attitude protection: at the micro-structural level, it is an appeal to auto-communications, at the macro-structural level, it is "studying of attitudes toward oneself as the result of understanding oneself as an actor in one or another life relation."<sup>14</sup> Another aspect of self-attitude protection is implemented at the level of organization of its structural components and the nature of their interactions. The researcher has analyzed an influence of self-attitude protection mechanisms on formation of an individual's adaptive strategies, his/her aspirations, goals, life perspectives, personal qualities, and the main line of self-fulfilment in general.

**The purpose of research is** to analyse particularities of attitudes towards themselves of students with high and low self-determination.

**The research was attended by** university students (the magister level) of 21–22 year old, totally was 155 people. The entire sample was divided into two groups in accordance with the student's pre-determined (in the comprehensive study) autonomy, self-realization, and life prospects: the groups, accordingly, consisted of individuals with high and with low self-determination.

**Research method.** To study students' peculiarities of self-attitude, the questionnaire on self-attitude developed by V.V. Stolin, S.R. Pantileev<sup>15</sup> was used. This questionnaire, developed on the basis of theoretical and empirical research, allowed us to identify three levels of self-attitude according to the degree of its generalization: general self-attitude; self-attitude differentiated by self-respect, auto-sympathy, self-interest and expected attitude of others; the level of concrete actions (readiness for them) regarding Self.<sup>16</sup> The data obtained by this method is presented in Table 1. The comparative analysis of group means by T-criterion showed statistically significant ( $p < 0,01$ ) differences for a number of indicators.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> V.V. STOLIN, S.R. PANTILEEV, *Oprosnik samootnoshenija*, in: *Praktikum po psihodiagnostike: psihodiagnosticheskie materialy*, M.: Izd-vo MGU 1988, p. 123–130.

<sup>16</sup> A.A. BODALEV, V.V. STOLIN, V.S. AVANESOV, *Obshhaja psihodiagnostika*, SPb.: Izd-vo «Rech'» 2000.

## 2. RESULTS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

The primary research task was to study peculiarities of manifestations of students' self-attitude indicators. The analysed statistically results of the questionnaire have shown that many self-attitude indicators for the group of highly self-determined students can be describes, according to the questionnaire authors' terminology, as "strongly pronounced." Thus, the average value of general self-attitude is 95,19 (of maximum 100); self-respect is 90,74, auto-sympathy is 84.21, self-interest is 92.20. As for the indicators measuring readiness for certain actions regarding Self, the average value of self-assurance is 86,99, self-acceptance is 95,50, interest in oneself is 88,0; and self-blaming is only 35,72. Note that the questionnaire authors do not recommend interpret results showed more than 80 and less than 40 points, since such data can be obtained under influence of secondary conditions, for example, under social desirability. In this case, we agree with the opinion of E.V. Seleznova that social desirability, as "a reflection and expression of the motivation of social approval," is not a secondary factor at self-attitude formation. In her opinion, having an attitude to him/herself, an individual consciously or unknowingly always correlates self-image with norms existing in society. Actually, the self-attitude model proposed by V.V. Stolin and S.R. Pantileev has the "expected attitude of others" components, reflecting expectations of social approval. Significance of such approval, emphasizes E.V. Seleznova, depends on age, education, pressure of the environment, conformity and field dependence, development of subjectivity.<sup>17</sup> For the studied sample, significance of social approval as a self-attitude factor is determined, in our opinion, first of all by the respondents' age, as well as a subjective "prestige" (albeit inappropriately overestimated) of their social status as university students in the capital (and students in arts have also widespread views about "particularity," "otherness," "difference" of creative professions).

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<sup>17</sup> E.V. SELEZNEVA, *Grani samoosushhestvlenija: ot samootnoshenija k samorealizacii*, Moskva–Berlin: Direkt-Media 2015, p. 173–174.

Table 1. Self-attitude of students with high and low self-determination

		General self-attitude	Self-respect	Auto-sympathy	Expected attitude of others	Self-interests	Self-assurance	Attitude of others	Self-acceptance	Self-management	Self-blaming	Interest in oneself	Self-understanding
Group I	X	95,19	90,74	84,21	71,41	92,20	86,99	57,67	95,50	73,06	35,72	88,00	73,98
	Sx	3,91	10,91	13,96	16,80	12,68	8,06	17,71	7,78	14,91	22,42	17,44	27,73
Group II	X	75,36	68,27	60,49	48,72	71,84	63,69	42,71	72,61	61,78	55,52	64,71	63,84
	Sx	17,80	22,16	25,68	26,21	28,78	20,98	19,57	28,09	19,68	30,08	32,49	28,18

*Note:* Group I – students with high self-determination, Group II – students with low self-determination; X is the mean value, Sx is the standard deviation

So, analyzing the data in Table 1, we can state that self-attitude indicators of most students are high (above 74 points) or average (50–74 points). Moreover, high general self-attitude is characteristic for the whole sample of students, but high – and very high indicators for self-respect, auto-sympathy and self-interest were demonstrated by highly self-determined students, as shown in Fig. 1. It can be argued that, at a general positive attitude towards oneself (the sense of “for” Self), the emotional self-attitude is more clearly manifested namely by students with high self-determination. Thus, such people are confident unconditionally in themselves, they believe in their strengths, abilities, energy, have positive self-esteem and approve themselves as a whole. In addition, rank analysis of the data show that self-interest and self-respect are the most expressed at this group of students, while the least pronounced is expected attitude of others, and therefore, highly self-determined students declare interest in their own thoughts and feelings, high readiness for self-knowledge, and confidence that they are interesting for others.

Rank analysis of the data for the group of students with low self-determination showed a less pronounced but similar picture: the indicators of self-interest and self-respect scored more points in comparison with other indicators, which, of course, is evidence of a positive self-attitude and readiness for self-knowledge, reflexion. The particular feature of this group is the following: self-respect, auto-sympathy, self-interest are formed at average levels, but the “expected attitude of others” indicator is quite low. We can assume a high degree of expectations of negative, disapproving attitudes from others, even close people, by such individuals. Considering themselves as unlike the others, they are inclined

to accept such a negative assessment of their own external and internal merits without attempts to improve their self-respect.

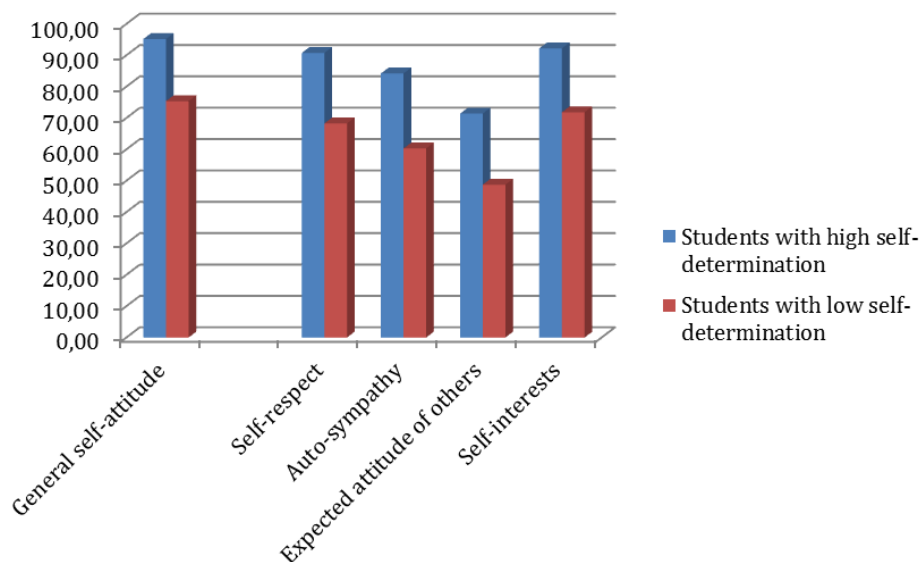


Fig. 1. General self-attitude and differentiated self-attitude of students with high and low self-determination

Let us examine the self-attitude indicators on the level of concrete actions (readiness for them) in relation to Self (fig. 2). The group of highly self-determined students showed, once again, the above described trend: high values of self-acceptance, self-interest, self-assurance, average values of self-management, self-understanding. The highest points were for the indicator of self-acceptance (95,5) and the lowest point for self-blame (35,72). Such results are, in our opinion, a manifestation of “super-positive” self-attitude in the context of the above-described need for social approval. Lower values of self-understanding and self-management compared with those of self-assurance, self-interest and self-acceptance may indicate that self-affirmation and self-knowledge of this young age is more important than own subjectivity as the source of the activity, internal goals, motives, impulses. These data correlate with the data of E.V. Selezneva.<sup>18</sup>

For students with low self-determination, the self-attitude indicators are average. In addition, as in the case of the above emotional self-attitude, “attitudes

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

of others” at this group is low and was estimated the lowest (42,71), indicating their readiness to highly negative assessments of their personalities and activities.

The comparison of these two groups draw attention to a “mirror” between “attitudes of others” and self-blame: the highly self-determined students showed accordingly 57,67 and 35,72, and poorly self-determined students did 42,71 and 55,52 respectively. We can assume existence of a high correlation of these indicators with the locus of control and state that students with low self-determination, compared with highly self-determined students, often experience such emotional reactions as irritation, contempt for themselves, self-blame.

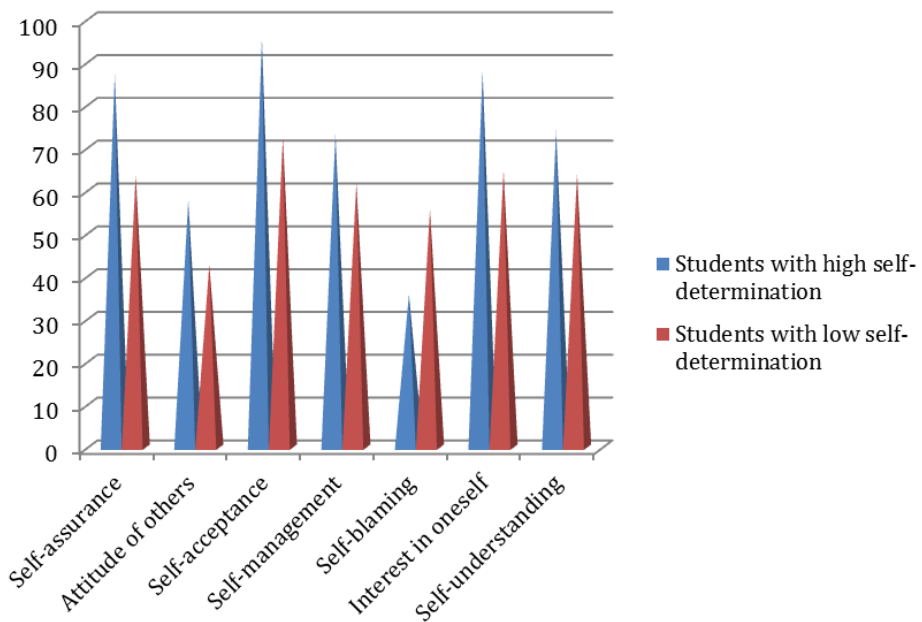


Fig. 2. Self-attitude on the level of concrete actions (readiness for them) with respect to Self of students with high and low self-determination

Analyzing the ratio of self-attitude indicators and self-attitude levels in percentages given in Table 2, we can conclude that, having, in general, high values of general self-attitude, a large part of students, especially from the group with low self-determination, showed low values of some self-attitude components. Thus, more than one third of the respondents had low auto-sympathy, self-assurance, and a quarter to a third of them showed low self-interest, self-respect, self-understanding and self-sufficiency. It should be noted that as for the poorly self-determined students, a number of indicators with the value within the limit



of “a characteristic is too low” is higher, compared to the group of highly self-determined students and the whole sample, for practically all indicators (except self-acceptance). The high values of self-respect and self-assurance in the group of the poorly self-determined students appears almost double time less often than that in the group of highly self-determined students: 46,9% and 49,6%, and 77,8% and 83.3% respectively. The above-mentioned tendency as for “attitude of others” has also been confirmed: the students with low self-determination mainly showed low values of this indicator both on a differentiated scale and on a scale of concrete actions: 34,4%. At the same time, this group of students showed the most often high values of the “self-blame” indicator (59,4%, compared with 55,6% in the highly self-determined group and 58% in the sample as a whole). That is, having a positive self-acceptance as a whole (the high mean values of self-acceptance – 62,5%), such students are dependent on attitudes of others, expecting a negative attitude towards themselves, which, accordingly, leads to activation of the mechanisms of protection of Self. They may have problems with understanding their potential and life prospects.

Table 2. The self-attitude components of students with high and low self-determination (in percent)

Self-attitude components	Total sample			Students with high self-determination			Students with low self-determination		
	Level of manifestation								
	TL	M	SP	TL	M	SP	TL	M	SP
General self-attitude	6	32	62	5,6	16,7	77,8	6,3	40,6	53,1
Self-respect	16	26	58	5,6	16,7	77,8	21,9	31,3	46,9
Auto-sympathy	26	18	56	16,7	22,2	61,1	31,3	15,6	53,1
Expected attitude of others	32	54	14	27,8	50	22,2	34,4	56,3	9,4
Self-interests	22	16	62	11,1	16,7	72,2	28,1	15,6	56,3
Self-assurance	26	18	56	11,1	5,6	83,3	34,4	25	49,6
Attitude of others	32	50	18	27,8	50	22,2	34,4	50	15,6
Self-acceptance	18	14	68	5,6	16,7	77,8	12,5	25	62,5
Self-management	24	24	52	16,7	27,8	55,6	28,1	21,9	50
Self-blaming	58	16	26	55,6	27,8	16,7	59,4	9,4	31,3
Interest in oneself	20	16	64	11,1	22,2	66,7	25	12,5	62,5
Self-understanding	30	22	48	38,9	11,1	50	25	28,1	46,9

Note: TL – the characteristic is too low; M – the characteristic is manifested; SP – the characteristic is strongly pronounced

As for the group of highly self-determined students, it should be noted that on average about 70% of them showed the “strongly pronounced” level of such indicators as general self-attitude, self-respect, auto-sympathy, self-interest, self-assurance, self-acceptance, indicating their acceptance of Self, confidence

in the ability to control own lives, high evaluation of own intentions. Although, it is possible to talk about undifferentiated emotionally positive self-perception, which does not include the cognitive component, since the average values of self-understanding of this group is the highest but still low compared to the poorly self-determined group and the sample as a whole (38,9%, 25%, and 30% respectively).

### 3. CONCLUSION

We can state that self-attitude in the structure of self-consciousness is understood as a complex dynamic emotional-estimative system, which has its components and levels, mechanisms of formation and protection, and which is formed during life's activities and supports and influences self-determination.

Analysis of students' self-attitudes has shown that the structure of self-attitude differs in the groups of students with high and low self-determination because its components are manifested with different force. However, the respondents are characterized by high general self-attitude and high and average indicators describing differentiated self-attitude and concrete actions toward Self. Further analysis will be aimed at finding correlations of the respondents' self-attitude indicators with other components in the structure of self-determination. It is also important to develop and implement effective techniques to promote development of personal potential, self-awareness, awareness of integrity and uniqueness of Self, own life goals, prospects, values, to support self-fulfilment and psychological well-being, which are the basis of self-determination.

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## CECHY SAMOSTANOWIENIA STUDENTÓW W KONTEKŚCIE SAMODETERMINACJI ROZWOJU OSOBOWOŚCI

### Streszczenie

Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie cech samostanowienia studentów w kontekście samodeterminacji ich rozwoju osobistego. Samostanowienie jest definiowane jako wielomodalny system wartości emocjonalnej, który jest zbudowany na zasadzie dynamicznej hierarchii i działa jako jedna z jednostek strukturalnych jądra dyspozycyjnego osobowości i struktury jej samoświadomości, wyraża cechy stosunku osoby do siebie i zapewnia centrowanie jej wewnętrznej przestrzeni i kształtowanie wektora sensu jej drogi życiowej. Pozytywna samoocena osobowości wraz z jej osobistymi aspiracjami i perspektywami, autonomią, poczuciem własnej skuteczności uważane są za wskaźnik samookreślenia osobowości. Korzystanie z kwestionariusza autotestu W.W. Stolina, S.R. Pantilejewa pozwala zidentyfikować trzy poziomy samostanowienia według stopnia uogólnienia: samostanowienie globalne; samostanowienie zróżnicowane przez poczucie własnej wartości, autosympatię, własne zainteresowanie i oczekiwaną postawę innych; poziom konkretnych działań (gotowość na nie) w odniesieniu do swojego «Ja». Analiza badania samostanowienia studentów daje podstawy do twierdzenia, że badani charakteryzują się ogólnie

wysokimi wskaźnikami integralnego samostanowienia oraz wysokimi i średnimi wskaźnikami zróżnicowanych skal i skali postaw. W grupach studentów o wysokiej i niskiej samodeterminacji struktura samostanowienia różni się pod względem wyrazistości jej składników.

**Słowa kluczowe:** osobowość; samodeterminacja; samostanowienie; integralne samostanowienie; autosympatia; samoocena; zainteresowanie sobą; pewność siebie; obwinianie się; zrozumienie siebie.