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The influence of mental hygiene on communication styles in couples

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Abstract: A couple represents a bond formed between two people that develop and evolve together, which have the common objective of forming a family. We ask ourselves which are the factors which influence the communication style of the partners in the relationship. This work has the general objective of determining possible correlations between some variables which define the mental hygiene of the individual and the communication styles in the couple. In this regard 78 people, male and female, within the ages of 19 and 66 years old have been tested. I provided this objective with special importance as it involves all directions of research. Likewise, I consider that this research highlights the importance of communication in a couple at any age. The hypotheses of the research consider the different correlations between nonassertive, aggressive, manipulating and assertive communication styles and the psychologic factors such as the types of personal autonomy: cognitive, behavioral, emotional and value. Unhappiness in the couple and marital conflict have also been targeted. I also followed a comparison related to the dominance of a communication style between sexes. Following the correlations and the comparison made, I found the following aspects: a high level of cognitive autonomy leads to an assertive communication style in a couple, a low level of value autonomy determines unhappiness in a couple, a low level of behavioral autonomy leads to a nonassertive communication style in a couple, a high level of marital conflict does not determine a manipulative communication style, men communicate more aggressively in a couple compared to women, and a low level of conscientiousness determines a nonassertive style in couples.

Key words: Influence, hygiene, style, communication, couple

1. Psychohygiene

The term psychohygiene originates from the Greek words psiche, meaning soul, and hygeea, embodying the name of the goddess of health, daughter of the god of medicine Asklepios. For thousands of years, from ancient times to the present day, Asklepios has been the symbol of medicine, while Hygeea embodies the symbol of health. Metaphorically speaking, the two deities



embody a perfect balance of a healthy body, a balance that is represented by the well-known symbol of pharmacies, namely a snake coiled around a body holding a goblet. In other words, from the translation it appears that psychohygiene is the science that follows the mental (soul) health of a human.

This area of health is subject to continuous trials, influenced by the human's lifestyle and is also under the influence of various stressful factors, and mental life can be visibly affected.

As a definition of hygiene, it is presented as the science of preserving and promoting the health of human communities, being the basic branch of preventive medicine (Rusu, 2010:142)

Psychohygiene, seen as a general concept, is defined as represented as a branch of psychology that studies the psychological factors involved in maintaining health, but also in the prevention, etiology and treatment of diseases (Enăchescu, 2008: 24).

Isaac Ray, known as the founder of the American Psychiatric Association, believes that mental hygiene is an art, the art of protecting the mind from incidents and influences that might inhibit or destroy its energy, qualities and development, and at the same time seeks to establish the measures to maintain and develop it. As well as the prevention of the appearance of mental illnesses, deviance sociopathies, both at the individual and collective level, and the social-moral part aims at shaping mental health in relation to the values of the cultural model (Tudose, 2003:80)

2. Communication in a couple's relationship

The notion of a couple, which appeared in the XII century, has its roots in the French language and denotes the union between a man and a woman.

In general, the couple is explained as a pair or a meeting of two people based on a constant connection or due to a coincidental proximity (Turlic, 2009: 5). Accidental couples refers to those couples who have no past or future history in common, and how they come about is the subject of social psychology study. From the perspective of couple and family psychology, the notion of couple implies the pair whose relationship lasts over time.

One of the definitions of the communication process is given to us by David Berlo, who tells us that it represents a fundamental way of psycho-social interaction of people carried out in articulated language or through other codes, in order to transmit information to achieve stability or changes of individual group behavior (Berlo, 2000: 46).

For a more complete presentation, considering the factors involved in the act of communication, we can say that it also represents a process that involves several components existing in the interaction namely: decoding, transmitters, encoding, receivers, messages, noise, competence, feedback, performance, communication channels, effects, context experience and ethics (Rășcanu, 2002: 61).

As defined communication is more than the mere transmission of information. The term requires an element of success in conveying a message, whether information, ideas or emotions.

One of the biggest problems in communication is that most couples have a basic misconception of what the purpose of communication is. Most people approach talking with a partner as a debate in which each presents a preconceived version of the reality of what is happening between the two partners. The fault with this approach is the mistaken assumption that either partner can enter the conversation with an accurate perception of reality. This is not possible



because neither person has the necessary information to determine what the reality is, i.e., what is happening between them (Degges-White, 2016).

Kelly Collins, a couple's therapist, claims that during a couple's conversation, if one partner reacts aggressively or self-destructively, it's virtually impossible for the other partner not to behave the same way. The conversation is over, and the intimidating partner has won. In reality, both people suffered disastrous defeats. Also, the cost of intimidation is high. The intimidating partner must lose their autonomy, after which their spirit is broken, and courage is lost (2016).

Another recommendation made by Pinola is to take into account parental or childish communication, that is the ways in which one can come to communicate from a childish or parental position. Childish communications involve deferring and submitting, seeking direction or definition, servility or service, seeking approval and/ or criticism. Parental communications involve directing and dominating, being condescending and assertive, acting as a judge and critic. None of these qualities have a place in communications between two independent adults in an equal relationship.

2.1. Emotional communication

Emotional communication in psychology is made up of emotional expressions. These are those expressions in humans, while speaking, observable verbal and nonverbal behaviors that communicate an internal emotional or affective state. Examples of emotional expressions are facial movements such as smiling or grimacing or behaviors such as crying or laughing, anger, sadness or happiness. Emotional expressions can occur with or without self-awareness. Presumably, individuals have conscious control over their emotional expressions. However, they do not need to have awareness of their emotional or affective state to express the emotion (Bucci, 2001).

Over the past 20 years, researchers have proposed different and often competing models to explain emotion and emotional expression, going all the back to Charles Darwin. However, all theorists agree that all normal, functioning people experience and express emotions with their voices, faces and bodies.

In 2011, Coli Wyling set out to study the emotional patterns of communication between partners in couple relationships. For this he comprised a research batch in which he asked 29 married or cohabiting couples to engage in a videotaped discussion about a problem they had in their relationship. In a subsequent experimental session, partners identified specific communication that they believed had an important influence on the discussion and then rated the communications in terms of the feelings the communicator intended to convey and the recipient's reactions.

Partners attempted to experience both the positive and negative feelings their partner perceived toward them, however only the negative feelings were mutual. This was because subjects were sensitive to differences in negative feelings. Their partners reported that they correctly expressed and interpreted these feelings but were inaccurate in perceiving their partner's expressions of their positive feelings. Men (but not women) interpreted their partner's failures to express love as an indication of hostility, whereas women (but not men) interpreted their partner's lack of hostility as an indication of love.

These and other results have been conceptualized in terms of a general model of emotional communication. Model parameters related to the hostility of partner's communications were often related to women's satisfaction with their relationship and their beliefs about relationships in



general, however they were unrelated to men's satisfaction and general beliefs. This suggested that women are generally more negatively affected by the expression of excessive hostility than men (Gaelick L., and colab. 2016).

2.2. Instrumental communication

Instrumental communication represents the type of communication achieved through instrumental interaction. In other words, instrumental communication is a type of multisensory-motor interaction between humans and physical objects during which the human manipulates a physical object to perform a task that is not only the object of manipulation for itself (Igi Global Disseminator of Knowledge).

In this type of communication the main objective is to "convey" an intended meaning (informational and/or persuasive) accurately and effectively and where communication is only a means to an end. The main focus is on explicit content (and/or effects) and not on forms or stylistic features. It is a communicative style that foregrounds clarity of denotation and grounds ambiguity, connotation, aesthetic and expressive functions.

Gender stereotypes often frame instrumental communication as a masculine style.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Objectives

The main objective is to determine the possible correlations between certain variables that define the individual's mental hygiene and communication styles in couples.

O.1: Analysis of the level of cognitive autonomy in correlation with communication styles.

O.2: Analysis of marital unhappiness in correlation with types of autonomy.

O.3: Analysis of communication styles in correlation with marital conflict.

O.4: Identifying gender differences in couple communication styles.

3.2. Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: It is assumed that people who have a high level of cognitive autonomy have an assertive communication style in couples.

Hypothesis 2: It is assumed that a low level of value autonomy determines unhappiness in the couple.

Hypothesis 3: It is assumed that a low level of behavioral autonomy determines a nonassertive communication style in the couple.

Hypothesis 4: It is assumed that a high level of marital conflict determines a manipulative communication style in the couple.

Hypothesis 5: It is assumed that men have a higher level of aggressive communication style in couples, compared to women.

Hypothesis 6: It is assumed that a low level of consciousness determines a nonassertive communication style in couples.

3.3. Sample description

In forming the sample, I used a random sampling technique.

The sample includes 78 people aged between 19 and 66, 27 male and 51 female.



3.4. Research tools

To carry out this research, the following tools were used:

- The F.F.P.I. survey – Five-Factor Personality Inventory
- The personal autonomy survey
- The Communication styles survey
- The KMCS survey – Kansas marital conflict scale (KMCS)
- The LDI survey – Life distress inventory (LDI)

4. Presentation of research results.

The data obtained from the survey of the 78 subjects was processed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (S.P.S.S.) program.

Hypothesis 1. It is assumed that people who have a high level of cognitive autonomy have an assertive communication style in couples.

Given that the two variables do not have normal distributions, we will apply the Spearman correlation to see if there is a correlation between cognitive autonomy and assertive communication style.

Table 1. Spearman correlation coefficient

		Cognitive autonomy	Assertiv communication style
Spearman's rho	cognitive autonomy	1,00	
	Correlation Coefficient		,025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
assertive communication style	N	7	78
	Correlation Coefficient		1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,02	
	N	7	78

The table above (table 1) indicates that cognitive autonomy correlates with assertive communication style because the significance threshold value is 0.025, which is less than the significant value of 0.05.

The couple relationship represents the most complex relationship and that only balanced and determined people can achieve happiness. Thus, a high level of cognitive autonomy gives the person the ability to reason independently, and that facilitates assertive communication with the partner. People with high cognitive autonomy make decisions, think critically, self-evaluate, and in a couple it is convenient for them to communicate on the same level with their partner and to express their feelings and support their beliefs firmly and courageously, without hurting their partner, but for the benefit of the relationship as a couple.

A main characteristic of people with high cognitive autonomy is the feeling of self-confidence. This trust allows the person to express their feelings towards their partner, express their needs but at the same time respect their partner's. Also, the belief of these people is that they act



in accordance with the choices made, thus being able to satisfy their needs in the couple relationship without violating their satisfaction of their partner's needs.

A high level of cognitive autonomy also represents the ability to make decisions, and this involves a process of identifying and selecting alternatives. This characteristic allows people to give due importance to personal feelings, needs, desires that are as important as those of the partner. The people live a balance that facilitates good communication with their partner and maintaining the couple's relationship to a satisfactory standard. Also, cognitive autonomy involves curiosity, anticipation, understanding, common sense, planning, responsibility. All this helps the individual to communicate assertively in the couple relationship. Communicating assertively with your partner improves the quality of the relationship between the two.

The positive self-image aimed at achieving common goals, the enthusiasm and determination defined by the high level of cognitive autonomy lead to a better relationship with the partner. When such a person values himself, he also implicitly values his partner, the communication between them becoming one-way. The mobilization of personal resources necessary to go in a desired direction, freedom of mind, wider horizon and openness are qualities that have the effect of an effective relationship between the two partners.

High cognitive autonomy allows individuals a process of self-evaluation that aids them to help themselves and promote truth and courage as values, while observing how their own perception of things around them evolves. It is thus easy for them to express their needs through empathic statements, understanding and at the same time giving respect, satisfying their needs and desires and feeling comfortable in the relationship.

Hypothesis 2. It is assumed that a low level of value autonomy determines unhappiness in the couple.

Given that the two variables have normal distributions, we will apply the Pearson correlation coefficient to check if there is a correlation between the two variables.

Table 2. Spearman correlation coefficient

		value autonomy	unhappiness in the couple
value autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1,00	,035*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	78	78
unhappiness in the couple	Pearson Correlation	,035*	1,00
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	78	78

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis is confirmed from a statistical point of view, which means that a low level of value autonomy determines unhappiness in the couple. I believe that a low level of value autonomy means the lack of one's own set of principles and values or the lack of resistance to one's own convictions in front of others, implicitly in front of the partner. Thus, this instability at the cognitive, emotional and behavioral level leads over time to unhappiness in the couple. People who



do not form and respect a series of principles are changeable in the relationship, and this does not support the evolution of the couple. Due to self-loathing, these people become unable to build and maintain a healthy loving relationship and become unhappy with their partner.

One cause of their unhappiness is their own instability which creates erratic behavior, inappropriate and unclear reactions. The other cause is triggered by the first, and here we refer to the partner's behavior which also becomes unclear and unstable, no matter how balanced it may be, because long-term exposure to changing mood leads to uncertainty, insecurity.

Also, people with a low level of value autonomy have low self-esteem and easily give up their opinions. As in a couple, the involvement of both partners is needed, mutual support, opinions to make decisions together, succeed and enjoy. The impossibility of practicing healthy behavior in the couple relationship leads to the person's unhappiness.

Low self-esteem leads to devaluation and a person who does not know his worth cannot be happy. This is even more valid in couples where the values, beliefs and behaviors of the two partners need a trend leading to uniformity and acceptance. Thus, own devaluation leads to unhappiness in the couple because a person who devalues himself does not have the resources necessary to accept the partner, and the evolution together with them becomes more difficult.

People with a low level of value autonomy do not have independent attitudes and beliefs. They oscillate in ideas, beliefs, and manifestations. And this is harmful to the relationship of the couple. Partners need balance, firm attitudes and determination, commitment and implications. If a person does not appreciate themselves, they cannot appreciate their partner either and become unhappy with them, even leading to disputes, reproaches, excessive demands and stress.

The low level of value autonomy of a partner causes unhappiness in the couple because he lives according to false expectations and prolongs a state of alertness in the couple through the instability of his inappropriate feelings and behaviors. Happiness means responsibility and assumption, and such a person expresses imbalance unpredictability that cannot provide satisfaction, peace and inner joy.

Hypothesis 3. *It is assumed that a low level of behavioral autonomy determines a nonassertive communication style in couples.*

Given that the two variables have normal distributions, we will apply the Pearson correlation the see if there is a correlation between behavior autonomy and nonassertive communication style.

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficient

	behavioral autonomy	sc.nonasertiv
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behavioral autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004
	N	78	78
sc.nonassertiv	Pearson Correlation	**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	
	N	78	78

Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level

Table 3 indicates that behavioral autonomy correlates with nonassertive communication style because the significance threshold value is 0.004, thus lower than the significant value of 0.05.

The hypothesis is confirmed from a statistical point of view, specifically people with a low level of behavioral autonomy have a non-assertive communication style.

I believe that people who have a low level of behavioral autonomy are people who act according to expectations of others, without having their own set of beliefs to guide their behavior. This also has an impact on the couple relationship, with partners resorting to a passive avoidance attitude in the relationship with their partner, i.e. a non-assertive communication style.

The lack of behavioral autonomy is defined by dependent reactions, by camouflaging and indulging the partner's behavior. But these manifestations do not exclude the feeling of hatred and resentment towards the partner who assumes responsibility in and for the couple.

We can say that people with low behavioral autonomy do not react, do not get involved and do not actively participate in building and maintaining a harmonious couple relationship. So, they do not express their own opinions, beliefs and wishes in relation to the decisions that are taken as a couple, with the changes that may occur, but adopt a role of false supporter of the other partner in assuming the decisions and changes. This behavioral pattern unfortunately leads to self-dissatisfaction and experiencing negative emotions such as frustration, resentment or envy. In this way, a person unable to assume their own behaviors adapted to their beliefs ends up communicating non assertively in a couple, that is, hiding and running away rather than facing things.

Also, a low level of behavioral autonomy can be manifested in the couple's relationship through an excess of kindness and conciliation, this being determined by the lack of confidence in one's own ideas and the lack of courage in assuming any dissatisfaction. Another manifestation of the weak capacity for action is the postponement of making decisions regarding the couple's relationship. These people put things off because they do not consider themselves capable of completing an activity with benefits for both partners.

Lack of owning up to mistakes leads to individuals to act according to their partner or not at all. The basis of these manifestations is the fear of not being judged by the partner, but it can also be the intense anger felt in case of a possible failure. To avoid all these feelings, a person with a low level of behavioral autonomy prefers to submit to the partner's decision, thus communicating non assertively in the couple.

Hypothesis 4. *It is assumed that a high level of mental conflict determines a manipulative communication style.*



Given that one of the variables is not normally distributed we will apply the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient to see if there is a correlation between the two variables.

Table 4. Spearman correlation coefficient

		behavioral autonomy	sc.nonassertiv
behavioral autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004
	N	78	78
sc.nonassertiv	Pearson Correlation	**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	
	N	78	78

Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level

Table 4 shows a significance threshold of the correlation coefficient of 0.372, so higher than the significant threshold of 0.05, which means that there is no correlation between the variable marital conflict and manipulative communication style.

The hypothesis is not confirmed from a statistical point of view, which means that a high level of marital conflict does not determine a manipulative communication style.

Considering the rejection of the hypothesis, we can consider that a high level of marital conflict can most likely lead to aggressive communication. We also take passive-aggressive communication into account. The manifestation of one of these types of communication depends on the personality of the peers. We thus observe that a level of conflict in the couples does not necessarily lead to a manipulative communication style and that the partners do not try to control each other, do not have hidden intentions and do not avoid saying what they think. They also don't play a role, they don't want to get benefits from their partner, and they don't want the other to do as they want.

A high level of marital conflict is fueled by dissatisfaction, frustration, irresponsibility, failure to fulfill, excessive demands, incompatibility, lack of communication. These traits lead to marital conflict manifested through disputes, arguments, stress, reproaches and accusations. However, partners do not resort to manipulation as a couple in order to emerge victorious, to satisfy their needs or to obtain as many benefits as possible.

A possible manifestation is passive-aggressive communication in which partners aim to attack or hurt the other without directly communicating their needs, expectations and opinions. Some partners use this communication style because they feel both guilty about what is happening and unable to control what is happening. And so, they can use sarcasm, irony, even intentional sabotage of the partner. Otherwise, they may display a cooperative façade behavior while planning new ways to sabotage their partner and maintain marital conflict.

An extension of this type of communication is represented by the aggressive style, being the other possible reaction to marital conflict. In this case, due to the high level of arguments and dissatisfaction, the partners may demand their rights in an exaggerated manner. They express their opinions and feelings in a way that their partner's rights are denied or violated. They also do not



resort to manipulation but use force to intimidate their partner and obtain their own benefits. People who communicate aggressively because of conflict in the couple react this way because they believe that this is the way to resolve a conflict, with the aim of defeating the partner through control, intimidation and coercion.

Also, a high marital conflict can lead to the destruction of the relationship, more precisely to the separation of the two in the last resort, after the passage of shorter or longer periods of possible passive-aggressive or aggressive, and not manipulative.

Literature provides several theoretical working models to explain the factors that impact the development of a marital relationship. Al E. conducted research that focused on intrapersonal variables (for example, personality traits and partner behaviors) and/or interpersonal factors (for example: conflict, stress) as predictors of marital outcomes (for example: marital adjustment, satisfaction or stability). There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of stress in marital dynamics. Current research focuses on the role that partner self-efficacy beliefs play in the relationship between perceived marital stress and satisfaction. One hundred twelve married adults (N + 56 couples) completed an adapted version of the Perceived Stress Scale, along with the General Self-Efficacy Scale and a scale created to capture marital satisfaction. Baron and Kenny's analysis technique was used to explore the moderating role of self-efficacy beliefs. Marital satisfaction was positively associated with perceived self-efficacy and negatively related to higher levels of perceived stress. The role moderation hypothesis was not supported. However, our partial results were consistent with previous studies demonstrating the negative impact of marital stress. Some theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Hypothesis 5. *It is assumed that men have a higher level of aggressive communication style in couples compared to women.*

The nonassertive communication style variable was tested using the communication styles questionnaire.

Given that the distribution in the case of aggressive communication style is normal, we will apply the parametric method T-Test for independent samples to check whether the hypothesis is confirmed or not.

Table 5. Test T for independent samples

		t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Sc.	Equal	1,260	,265	2,158	78	,034	1,431	,663	,110	2,753



Agresiv	variances			2,267	,027	1,431	,632	,169	2,694
	assumed				60,969				
	Equal								
	Variaces								
	not assumed								

From table 5 we observe a significance threshold of less than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis is confirmed and that we have significant differences between male and female people in terms of aggressive communication style. Men communicate more aggressively compared to women, which is also proven by the average of the answers given by them.

The hypothesis is statistically confirmed, which means that men communicate more aggressively in couples compared to women.

I believe this is because there is a considerable difference between the way men and women process information. While women are more analytical, men are more pragmatic, and this characteristic represents a predisposition towards aggressive communication in couples.

Men's more aggressive communication style has been built throughout human evolution and is valid in any area of functioning, including the couple relationship. Prehistory is the period which humanity had not yet fully emerged from the wilderness, and civilization was limited to communities inhabited by humans. From then on, the roles crystallized so that the men, because they were physically more massive went hunting and the women, physically thinner, cooked what they hunted. These two roles were equally important from a social point of view, because in this way they managed to maintain communities, families, and children. However, the status of women was one of subordination to men, and they considered cooking, raising children and taking care of them as activities that did not rise to the importance of male occupations such as hunting, building houses, protecting communities, etc. Men ruled the world, waged wars, made decisions, while women did not have access to culture, education and leading society. Due to the risks they had to take, they developed a more aggressive side that they also show as a couple.

Men can also communicate more aggressively because they are dominantly rational and temperamental, and their first reaction tends to be one of rejections in an act of communication, while women first accept something and then analyze it.

Because men are based on instinct to preserve life, they can have harsher reactions and communicate more combatively, and this also manifests itself in the couple relationship. They can become excessively firm in their expression, impose their point of view, adopt shocking behavior, resort to threats and even tend to always be in the front, to have the last word.

Men also predominate this communication style compared to women and because of their dynamic boisterous nature. They manifest themselves directly, spontaneously and categorically, while women, being predominantly affective, can be overwhelmed by emotional states due to which they can act either explosively or through silence, giving up.

Hypothesis 6. *It is assumed that a low level of conscientiousness determines a nonassertive communication style in the couple.*

The conscientiousness variable was tested during the F.F.P.I. questionnaire, and the nonassertive communication style variable was tested using the communication styles questionnaire.



Given that both variables have a normal distribution, we will apply the Pearson correlation coefficient to see if there is a significant correlation between the two variables.

Table 6. Pearson correlation coefficient

		conscientiousness	sc.nonassertiv
conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	1	**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001
	N	78	78
sc.nonassertiv	Pearson Correlation	**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	
	N	78	78

Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level

Table 6 shows a correlation coefficient threshold of 0.001, which means that there is a correlation between the conscientiousness variable and the nonassertive communicative style variable, because the value obtained is less than the significant value of 0.05.

The hypothesis is confirmed from a statistical point of view. A low level of conscientiousness determines a nonassertive communication style.

I believe that people who have a low level of conscientiousness are people who lack exactingness, rigor and seriousness. Practicing behaviors that denote these weaknesses also leads to a passive fleeing attitude in the couple, to a nonassertive communication style. Thus, the lack of correctness and taking responsibility for one's own actions in the couple relationship also characterizes an ineffective way of communication in which this partner also tends to run away from responsibilities instead of owning up to them.

A person's conscientiousness is defined by responsibility, sense of duty, effort, accuracy, perseverance, care and attention. Or the lack of all of them in a couple relationship supports the individual's tendency to run away from reality, to hide and not actively participate in the decisions that need to be made. A person who does not develop a sense of responsibility cannot provide or create balance in the couple.

Thus, irresponsibility, lack of seriousness, disinterest and even fear of taking responsibility create an unhealthy, passive communication environment. These people postpone making decisions due to their lack of responsibility, being unable to choose. And because choosing means effort, because they also have a fear of failure, they prefer to submit to the decisions made by their partner. Also, out of fear of being judged, these people do not express their needs and desires to their partner, so they do not communicate honestly, openly. They can even ignore their own rights and give their partner the chance to violate them and all because of the lack of exactingness, rigor and tenacity.

People with a low level of conscientiousness are also characterized by inaction, the absence of precision and promptness in reaction. They are slackers, uninvolved, who experience the



discomfort of their consequences through the anger accumulated from the regret of lack of involvement. They are not brave and spontaneous as a couple, they do not actively participate in the decisions that are made, they even think that it is better for the other to make the decisions, so that later they become angry because of their non-commitment in the decision.

The absence of duty consciousness and complacency in situations solved by the other can also lead to behaviors that express an excess of kindness and conciliation. These are manifestations of a lack of courage and commitment; they are steps taken towards unhealthy communication and even towards the deterioration of the relationship. Those who assume their own principles and behaviors can communicate assertively, while people who are unbalanced from this point of view and who act in a couple based on their own interest and only for their own benefit end up being supporters of a non-assertive communication in which they indulge their partner's decisions believing that they are acting correctly and efficiently. This behavior is what I can actually do

Conclusions

This paper looked at the influence of mental hygiene on communication styles. Mental hygiene was approached regarding the different types of personal autonomy. The level of marital conflict and unhappiness in the couple were also considered in addition to communication styles.

The research was conducted on a sample of 78 people, of which 27 men and 51 women aged between 19 and 66 years of age.

Hypothesis 1, according to which people with a high level of cognitive autonomy communicate assertively as a couple, was confirmed. Thus, people who can reason independently, form their own opinions and make decisions can communicate honestly, openly with their partner, expressing their needs and respecting them at the same time, those of their partner.

Hypothesis 2, according to which a low level of value autonomy leads to unhappiness in the couple, was confirmed. I believe that people who do not establish their own set of values and do not respect them cannot be happy. Also, forming a set of values and not respecting it causes unhappiness in the couple because one's own devaluation does not allow the acceptance of the partner and the building of a harmonious relationship with them.

Hypothesis 3, according to which people with a low level of behavioral autonomy have a nonassertive communication style is confirmed. I believe that the lack of behavioral self-direction and acting according to the other's decisions leads to ineffective communication in which this person turns away and hides from assuming the consequences of their decisions, at the same time being frustrated by their non-involvement.

Hypothesis 4, that a high level of marital conflict leads to a manipulative communication style is not confirmed. This may be because people in disputes and under stress turn to passive-aggressive or even aggressive communication. We can say that in conflict situations people react impulsively, without planning their actions.

Hypothesis 5, that men communicate more aggressively in couples compared to women was confirmed. This may be due to the dynamic and active nature of men, while women are frailer and more emotional. Men can have reactions of attack, while women prefer to withdraw into themselves and stop communicating.

Hypothesis 6, that a low level of consciousness leads to a nonassertive communication style is confirmed. I believe that people who lack fairness, demandingness and perseverance run away



from assuming responsibilities, avoid making decisions as a couple and prefer that their partner acts according to their own principles.

Communication styles in couples vary depending on the level of personal autonomy of the partners, but also on the level of marital conflict and the level of consciousness. The partners of a couple differ in unique psychological traits, but also in the difference between the sexes. Communication is thus understood differently by each individual and each communicates according to their own potential and needs. Mental hygiene is a vast concept and the subject of this research can be developed.

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