sciendo
ПРИЛОЗИ. Одд. за мед. науки, XLIII 1, 2022 МАНУ
CONTRIBUTIONS. Sec. of Med. Sci., XLIII 1, 2022 MASA

10.2478/prilozi-2022-0001 ISSN 1857-9345

THE PERSONALITY PROFILES FOR CONTEMPORARY MACEDONIAN ACTORS

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ABSTRACT

Theatre is one of the higher cultural activities that characterise us as imaginative, creative and truly human. In general, theatre is an arena in which participants can mentally play, acting out their own fears and fantasies in an experimental way.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological personal characteristics, using the MMPI questionnaire, applied in a sample of Macedonian professional actors.

MMPI is used as an older form of the questionnaire, standardised in ex-Yugoslavia, and then translated into Macedonian. This is all done with a computer.

This research confirms that our (Macedonian) contemporary actors are normal people who function normally in everyday life and generally do not deviate from what in the psychology of personality are denotes as normal/abnormal. Small exceptions are still a rarity!

Some indexes of interest are included in this analysis of personal characteristics of actors.

Keywords: theatre, actors, personality profiles, MMPI

INTRODUCTION

Theatre is one of the higher cultural activities that characterise us as imaginative, creative and truly human. It was said that art, in general, is not necessary for human existence, but without it, our life would certainly be different.

The theatre is one of the main performing arts, and it has been developed as a form of cultural expression for over thousands of years. For this reason, many factors are involved in theatre that converge with the work here represented, interweaving stories. A play is the result of this combination of elements, and it consists of the representation of a story formed in acts where actors embody characters in front of an audience.

In general, theatre is an arena in which participants can mentally play, acting out their own fears and fantasies experimentally. It excites us with new ideas and perspectives and provides us with a new rehearsal for life.

Psychology and theatre have a remarkable amount in common. In using the basic concepts

and theories of psychology, actors can develop more concrete, logical approaches to characters.

In roleplaying, actors adopt and act out the role of characters, or parts, that may have personalities, motivations, and backgrounds different from their own. Roleplaying is like being in an improvisational drama, in which the participants are the actors who are playing parts, as well as the audience, in a sense.

As such, roleplay has been used extensively in vocational training situations since the 1960s out of the environment of the theatre and in vocation-oriented higher-education courses (e.g., Law, Medicine, Economics). In psychology and psychiatry, roleplay is used as a psychotherapeutic model for conflict resolution.

The actors are the professionals in charge of playing the characters, embodying their personality, their motivations and the concepts they symbolize. The actions of the actors define what happens in the fictional world in which the story takes place, they advance the development of the plot, and they also express the emotions that accompany the play through their non-verbal language, using their whole bodies and the qualities of their voice.

Actors in theatre work in a different way from those in audio-visual artistic media (such as film or TV) because of the material characteristics of their work: there are not any possibilities to retake the scene, they have to make the content understandable to the audience, and they have to deal with the limitations of space that are linked to the scene.

Actors receive more interest from the general public than almost any other social group, and for this reason they have been the subject of some psychological investigation. They are of psychological interest not just because of the public approbation they excite, but also because their profession has unusual characteristics. Additionally, actors choose to put themselves into situations that most people find aversive or anxiety-provoking: the constant scrutiny of large groups of strangers (the public) under circumstances they do not entirely control. It is, then, of interest to establish what the typical psychological characteristics of actors as a group are.

A number of previous studies have compared profiles of actors and controls on personality dimensions, with the most consistent finding being that actors are high on extraversion (Hammond & Edelmann, 1991; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992). High extraversion in actors is probably related to their orientation towards social attention and reward, as is similar in the case with politicians (Hill & Yousey, 1998). Indeed, theatre actors have even been taken as non-clinical models of histrionic personality disorder, a disorder defined by attention-seeking and excessive emotionality (Cale & Lilienfield, 2002). Actors have also been suggested to be high in self-monitoring (defined as the ability to control one's own expressive behaviour; Snyder, 1987), non-verbal emotional expressiveness (Friedman, Prince, Riggio, & DiMatteo, 1980), or expressiveness in general (Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992).

In the majority of research devoted to actors' personalities, the five-factor model of personality was used (Costa & McCrae, 1992), a model about which there exists considerable consensus, and whose constructs are often used to provide a broad-resolution, general-purpose description of personality variation.

Modern acting technique is based on the ability of the actor to enter into, comprehend, and interpret to others, the experiences of their lives, to know all their joys and sorrows, think their thoughts, and veritably to live their lives (Cole & Chinoy, 1970, cited in Hannah, Domino, Hanson, & Hannah, 1994, p. 278). This definition closely echoes Baron-Cohen's definition of empathizing as the drive to identify another person's emotions and thoughts, and to respond to these with an appropriate emotion (Baron-Cohen et al., 2003, p. 361). It is thus to be expected that accomplished actors will score highly on the empathizing dimension.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological characteristics of a sample of Macedonian professional actors, using the MMPI questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

The sample of 40 contemporary Macedonian actors was chosen by chance and interviewed with MMPI-201 psychometric scale. Both genders were included nearly in equal parts.

Firstly, why was the MMPI-201 chosen for this research?

The MMPI-201 is the oldest form of the test standardized in ex-Yugoslavia and, in general, it

is used more frequently in this region. MMPI-201 contains ten clinical scales: Scale 1- Hypochondriasis scale, which measures a person's perception and preoccupation with their health and health issues; Scale 2- the Depression scale, measures a person's depressive symptoms level; Scale 3- the Hysteria scale, measures the emotionality of a person; Scale 4- the Psychopathic Deviate scale, measures a person's need for control or their rebellion against control; Scale 5- Paranoia scale, measures a person's inability to trust; Scale 6- the Psychasthenia scale, measures a person's anxiety levels and tendencies for somatization and obsession; Scale 7- the Schizophrenia scale, measures a person's unusual/odd cognitive, perceptual, and emotional experiences, and Scale 10- the Mania scale, measures a person's energy, euphoria or hyperactivity.

Three scales L, F and K are validity scales and measure the readiness of the responders to this kind of examination. The L scale refers to the rigidity or naiveté of a responder's approach to the test material; the F scale refers to confused thinking/ lack of understanding the questions or malingering; the K scale refers to the responses chosen to be socially acceptable.

Raw scores on the scales are transformed into a standardized metric known as T-scores (Mean or Average equals 50, Standard Deviation equals 10), making interpretation easier for clinicians.

Before the analysis of clinical scales, some criteria should be satisfied: the L and K scales must have a score at ≤ 70 and the F scale at ≤ 80. A significant advantage of the MMPI over other self-report and observer rating scales is that it provides valid and reliable estimates of response bias.

Groups of scales are examined at the same time: the validity scales (L, F, K), the neurotic triad (Hs, D, Hy), and the psychotic tetrad (Pa, Pt, Sc, Ma). It is argued that the overall elevation of the clinical scales presents a reasonably accurate presentation of the degree of distress the client is experiencing (Greene, 2000). Having in mind some previous published data about specific, maybe some possible psychopathological traits in actors, MMPI-201 is used for obtaining the deepest analysis of psychological traits and to discover possible psychopathology. Additionally, myself, I have had very good experience with this instrument (Pop-Jordanova, 2015). Finally, in my practice, MMPI-201 was computerised making the calculations easier.

The obtained results of this research are presented as a group's profiles and discussed further. Statistics were calculated using the Statistic 10 package.

RESULTS

Evaluated actors are selected by chance from several theatres in our country, and participated by their own free will in this study. The investigation, however, is anonymous. The total

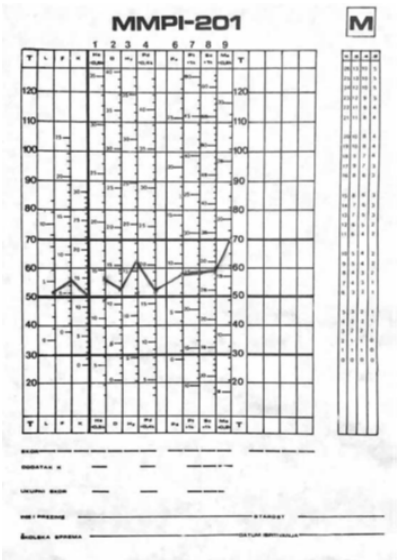


Figure 1. *Group's profile for male actors*

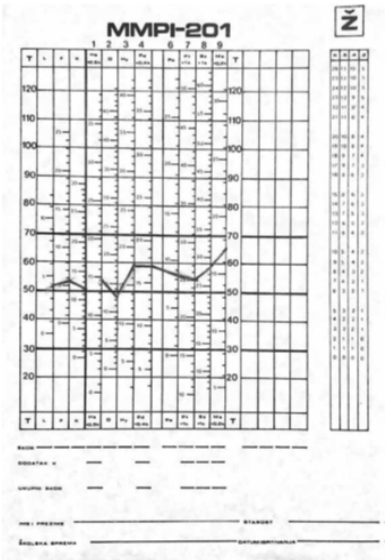


Figure 2. *Group's profile for women actresses*

number was 40, of both genders, the mean age was 35.8 years.

The obtained group's profiles for men are presented on Fig.1 and for women on Fig. 2.

Drawn on the original scales, the obtained group profiles for the actors (men and women) are within "normal" limits. Specifically, all values of scales between 50 and 70 are considered normal.

The comparison between two profiles is presented on Fig.3.

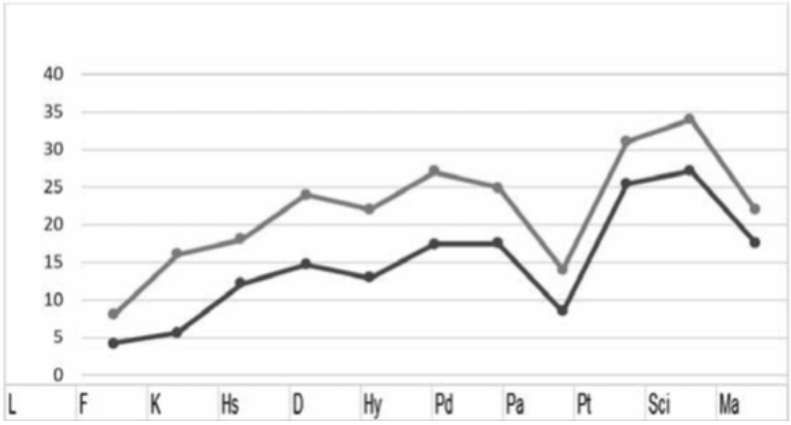


Figure 3. *Comparison of both profiles*

The darker line represents males, and the lighter females.

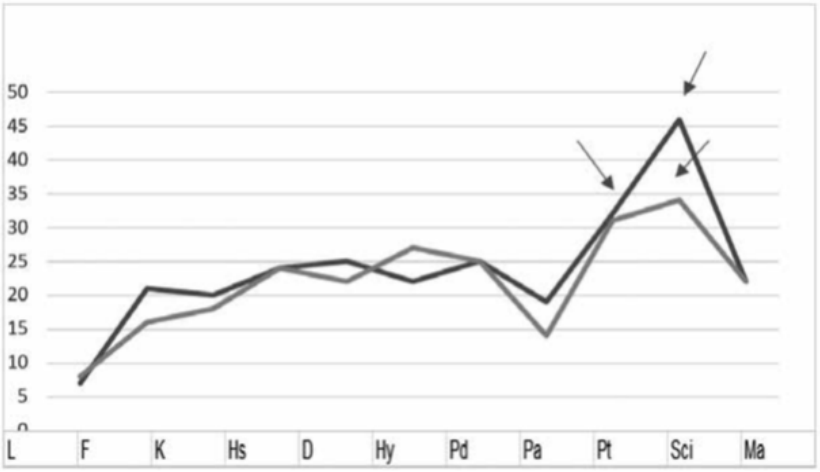


Figure 4. *Comparison of both profiles if the maximum obtained scores are calculated*

The darker line represents males, and the lighter females.
(Two peaks at Pt and Sci in both genders are visible, in females with smaller obtained scores)

If you compare the profiles obtained for actors and actresses, it looks quite similar. There was a single difference in the absolute values obtained on the scales. If profiles are created with maximum values obtained on the scales (Fig.4), then some differences are obtained: in males the most pronounced is the peak on the Sci (schizoid) scale, while in women, there are peaks on the Pt scales (worry, anxiety, tension, suspicion, obsession) and the Sci scale (schizoid tendencies, possible mental disorder, the word process, alienation). We must emphasize that such high values of scales are, however, less pronounced in the individual profiles.

The following figures show the graphs of the mean values for all clinical scales in actors and actresses. This allows for better visual representation of possible differences.

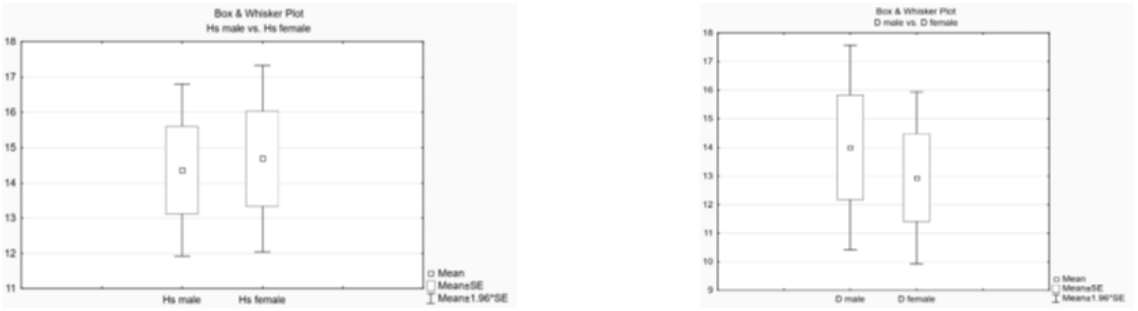


Figure 5. *Comparison of mean values for the scale Hs (hypersensitivity) and D scales (depression)*

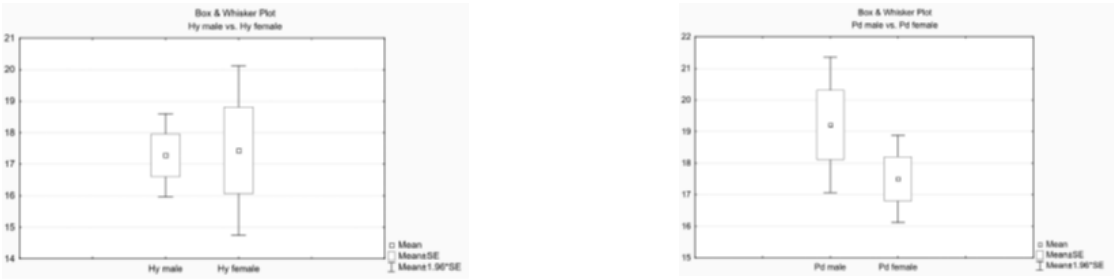


Figure 6. *Comparison for scale Hy (histrionic, hysterical tendencies) and Pd (psychopathological traits) scales*

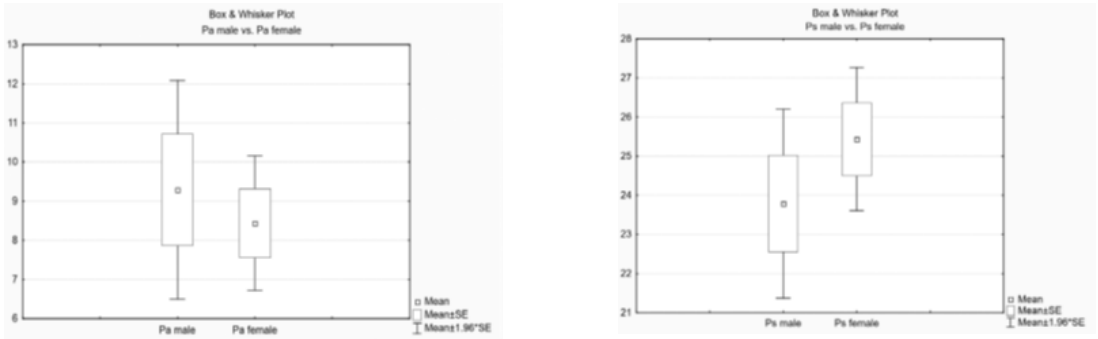


Figure 7. *Comparison for scale Pa (paranoid tendencies) and Ps (psychasthenia)*

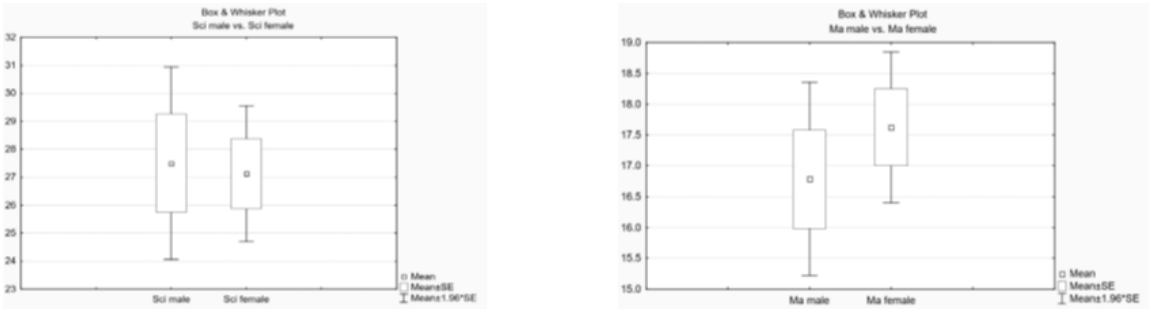


Figure 8. *Scale Sci (schizoid tendencies) and Ma scale (mania)*

As can be seen, the main difference between genders exists in scales for Hs, Hy, Ma and Ps in favour for females, but for males are more accentuated are Pa and Sci scales.

Finally, a correlation was calculated between all the factors contained in the test and this is shown in Figure 9. More inter self-dependencies, which are not very relevant for this research will not be explained.



Figure 9. *Statistical correlation between all factors analysed in MMPI-201*

DISCUSSION

Is someone normal, abnormal, or one who has any psychopathology? This is a question which must be answered very carefully in every psychometric evaluation. If we say that someone lies along the norm line, we are discussing his thought flow, his behaviour, his clothes, the type of food he eats, how he looks physically, who he lives with or sleeps, whether he is married or not, and, finally, whether he has any disease.

Therefore, "normality" can be defined depending on one's own, through definitions used in sociology or those which depend on universal standards of morality and human values.

Normality from a psychological point of view is defined as the absence of mental illness, realistic self-perception and contact with the real world, a strong sense of identity and positive self-esteem, autonomy and independence, ability to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, ability to want, ability to deal with stressful situations, as well as the ability to deactivation and advancement.

Abnormal is that which brings suffering, maladaptation, irrationality, unpredictability, violation of moral and social standards as well as a disability to perform daily activities. It is empirically proven that all human traits are arranged in a normal Gaussian curve of distribution. Namely, statistical measurements determine the average value of the particular property and what the deviations from it are. In that sense, everything around the mean is considered normal, as long as the abnormal is more lateral than the mean in both directions.

On the other hand, one who is pathological is considered to be the most lateral of the mean values obtained for one feature. This abnormality can be defined by statistical rarity (where the specified property is further from the mean), as a deviation from the social norms, the inability to function adequately or the deviation from ideal mental health. When normality/abnormality is determined, the culture and tradition in which one lives is very important. In view of these characteristics, there are very big differences in the understanding of western and eastern culture. In that sense, how much a behaviour, opinion or emotion is considered normal depends much more on cultural influences than on genetics and inheritance.

In fact, there is a continuum between the normal and the pathological. If we take Freud's opinion that when there is a conflict between the conscious and the subconscious part of the person, a condition occurs which is referred to as neurosis. Yet, if the conflict is between a person's relationship with the outside world, then we talk about psychosis. In this context, neurosis would be abnormal, and psychosis a pathological condition.

The MMPI Psychometric Test allows us to calculate other, specific physical personality traits important to clinical practice. The most important are, perhaps, scales indicating neuroticism (Hs, Hy, D), in contrast to those typi-

cal of psychotic individuals (Sc, Pa, Ma, Pt). There are three formulas by which, according to the obtained scores on the scales, normal is calculated, as well as the deviant, the sociopathic from the psychiatric, i.e. neurotic from psychotic behaviour. All scores obtained from our respondents are in the values between 50-70 which corresponds to normal. We find a few exceptions in some profiles.

A value of 70 (limit for pathology) is obtained in males for the scale mania. The actors (men) represent another peak on the Hy scale. Such a profile (designated Hy-Ma), and with low D scores (depression), in actors (men) would indicate vulnerability, overemphasis on self-problems, and impulsivity, rebellion, irritability and possible aggression.

The same peaks were found in the actresses, with another small peak on the Pd scale, which can be considered as a finding that is very common in the general population. This is a result of the denial of pathology, which simultaneously affects the increase of the Ma scale (as a negative correlation with the D scale), thus a breakthrough person who by all parameters is still "normal".

However, some other derived personality traits are more important to us which are calculated according to the obtained scores on the scales. In that direction, The Internalization Index (according to Welsh) is an indicator of emotional control, namely a tendency for "acting out". This term implies more expressing previously suppressed emotions, either through words or actions, and which, in psychology, are considered healthy and healing. This index is measured through the formula: IR = (Hs + D + Pt) : (Hy + Pd + Ma) where 1.00 is considered the theoretical value of a normal. The obtained value in our actors is for male IR = 0.97, and for female IR = 1.00, which speaks to good emotional control, especially among actresses.

The frustration tolerance index is also a very important feature of the person. This index is calculated using the formula: FT = (Pd + Ma) : (D + Hy)

For our actors, the IF for males is IF = 1.535, while for females IF = 1.156, both within the normal range.

Another index that can be derived from the scores obtained is also very important, namely of the index of aggression. There is active (open) and passive or hidden aggression. They are calculated according to the formulas:

AIH (active hostility index) = Pd + Ma

PAI (passive hostility index) = (Hy + 100) - (Pd + 2Pa)

The calculated indexes of our actors are as follows:

AIH for men 35.99; and for women 35.125. Both are almost equal and they suggest relatively low open aggression. Passive aggression is more spread among actresses (PAI = 139.94) while for actors it is PAI = 135.03.

Expressing one's own tension, insecurity, fear or nervousness has always been considered an important clinical element. That is why, with the help of the MMPI-201, scores can be used to calculate the Anxiety Index, with the formula: AI = 1.33 D + 1.00 Pt - 0.66 Hs - 0.66 Hy

For our actors, AI for males is 17.21, while for females AI =4,435, which is very different. In other words, the actors show a lot of higher open nervousness and hostility than actresses.

The obtained data confirm that the sex of the respondents does not affect the score of the scales contained in the instrument.

However, this research confirms that our (Macedonian) contemporary actors are quite normal people who function normally in everyday life and generally do not deviate from what in the psychology of personality are denotes as normal / abnormal. Small exceptions are still a rarity! But to remind you: according to Sigmund Freud, how much more flawless a person looks on the outside, the more demons there are inside.

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Резиме

ПРОФИЛИ НА ЛИЧНОСТА ЗА СОВРЕМЕНИТЕ МАКЕДОНСКИ АКТЕРИ

Нада Поп-Јорданова

Македонска академија на науките и уметностите Скопје, РС Македонија

Театарот претставува една од највисоките културни активности, која е имагинативна, креативна и вистински човечка. Општо земено, театарот е арена во која учесниците преку умствена игра ги прикажуваат сопствените стравови и фантазии на експериментален начин.

Целта на оваа студија е да се истражат психолошките карактеристики на личност, користејќи го прашалникот ММПИ на примерок од македонски професионални актери.

ММПИ, како постар психометриски тест, аплициран е поради постоење на негова стандардизација на територијата на поранешна Југославија, преведен е на македонски јазик и е овозможена негова компјутерска обработка.

Истражувањето потврди дека нашите македонски современи актери се нормални луѓе, кои функционираат нормално во секојдневниот живот и кои, генерално, не покажуваат девијации во она што психологијата на личноста го разграничува како нормално/ненормално. Малите исклучоци се, сепак, реткост!

Вклучени се и некои индекси што беа од интерес во оваа анализа на актерите.

Клучни зборови: театар, актери, профили на личност, ММПИ