

Dominance and submissiveness in diverse social roles

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Dominance as a stable personality trait of an individual is tested by a series of personality tests (eg, Cattell 16PF). But if we understand it as a variable describing the hierarchical superiority of an individual in a social interaction, we find that it may vary in different social roles. Monitoring the connection of dominance as a personality trait with dominance in relationships is an unexplored area due to the fact that there are not many standardized methods how to determine the dominance in a romantic relationship.

The aim of our study was to 1) verify that the degree of dominance as the personal characteristics of an individual corresponds to his dominance in a romantic relationship and 2) find out the spheres of dominance in partnership based on qualitative analysis of interviews with both partners

In the final session of longitudinal research of cohabitation (Klapilová et al. 2006 - 2009), 86 pairs completed a set of standardized questionnaires that was used to determine their personal dominance and dominant behaviour (IPIP- International Personality Item Pool; NEO-PI-R-subscale of assertiveness).

Dominance/ submissiveness in a partnership were determined on the basis of semi-structured interviews which were conducted with both partners separately, also during the final session. The basis of the interview was a narration of various activities of both partners in which dominance and submissiveness is manifested. Qualitative analysis of transcripts of these interviews determined whether individuals are dominant in the partnership.

Another guideline to determine the hierarchy of the tested pairs was an experimental situation in which partners had to read a projective story with an open end and they had to agree to its end. Partners were given space to discuss the end of the story alone, but the discussion was recorded on a Dictaphone. The degree of dominance/ submissiveness of the partner was evaluated by three raters based on listening to these recordings. The raters were orientating themselves according to which partner was more pushing during the discussion and whose opinion ultimately prevailed.

The relation between the variables was tested in SPSS program using regression analysis.

The results show that dominance as a personality trait corresponds to the dominance in a romantic relationship just in women. Qualitative analysis discovered seven spheres of dominance in a romantic relationships.

Keywords: partner hierarchy, domination / submissiveness