



Social Psychology

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Gender particularities of non-verbal patterns of the confidential relation to the Other

The current research is dedicated to the acute problem of interpersonal trust and particularities of nonverbal patterns of confidential relations. The important feature of this research is determining patterns of nonverbal expression of the confidential feeling and distinguishing their gender differences.

Key words: *trust, interpersonal relations, self-disclosure, nonverbal patterns of confidential relations, gender differences of trust displaying.*

The interpersonal relations are considered the most important and carefully studied problems of social psychology, at theoretical as well as empirical level. By now scientists and researchers have accumulated precious empirical material upon these problems and have built interesting theoretical models. A lot of researches concentrated on problems of interpersonal relations are spread all over a large spectrum of socio-psychological phenomena: interpersonal aggression, attraction, dislike, friendship, affection, altruism, love, antipathy, jealousy, empathy and etc. However the phenomena of positive emotional relation and assessment have escaped from specialists' field vision. Among those "lost" we can name trust phenomenon,

which is often linked to the notion of "faith", but they are not identical. The notion of trust exists and objectively functions in everyday psychology, but the determination of trust phenomenon has overcome a long winding way in social psychology. Though the studies of confidential behavior, especially non-verbal, are still limited.

The whole «constellation» of researchers touches the problem of trust in their works, considering it as a condition of different phenomena existence connecting the man with the environment (E.Ericson, 1967; T.Govir, 1992), with society (S. Dzhourard, 1959; I.S.Kon, 1973, 1984; K.A.Aboulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1981; L.A. Petrovskaya, 1982; L.Ya.Gozman, 1987; B.F.Porshnev, 1987; A.A. Kronik, E.A.Kronik, 1989 and others), with his own personality (I.S.Kon, 1967; A.Bandoura, 1977; E. Shostrom, 1992; K.Podzhers, 1994; F.Perlz, 1995 and others.).

Some authors regard trust as an undoubted condition of personal interaction and common understanding: «Confidential communication is such communication when one person, speaking with the other, confides him some "confidential information" –ideas, feelings, sufferings, revealing some or other sides of his personal inner world» [5; 6]. In our opinion, this approach contains the confidence definition through the



act of giving some confidential information, but the phenomenon of confidence itself is not defined.

Only in last decades, in our national research studies, confidence starts figuring as independent socio-psychological phenomenon, they study the role of confidence in personality behavior. The confidence acquires the status of "social capital", it means the instrument, providing society existence and development» [8].

One of these approaches how to analyze the problem of trust in modern society was proposed by P.Shtompka, the professor of Krakovskii University. In his report «Trust, distrust and the paradox of Democracy», the author proposes third-dimensional model of trust [10]. The proposed model includes as components «reflected reliability», «basic credulity» and trust appeared under culture influence. The term of "reflected reliability", presented in this approach, in author's interpretation close to confidential acts in interpersonal relations, while the trust itself, is considered as a personal trait. Of special interest is the culture of trust, which releases and mobilizes human activity, contributing to creative, natural, businessman's activity, sociability, diverse interaction between people. According to Shtompki, the culture of distrust in the society paralyzes human activity, evoking conformism and even real pessimism, alienation, which menaces to break interpersonal relations.

The researcher R. Sho distinguishes the main imperatives of confidence, he thinks, the confidence should be based on them [9]. He classifies as these imperatives: 1). Productivity. 2). Consequentiality, the words should correspond to the acts. 3). Caring behavior. If the first two imperatives can be conventionally united, they directly form trust in «the other», then the caring behavior, as we believe, should be treated as support, understanding and recognition of the value of the «other».

The research carried out by Skripkina T.P. «Confidence psychology» allows to accurately determine the phenomenon of trust as a personal trait, underline its characteristics and exertions in communication [7]. The theoretical analysis let the author to make several conclusions, we'd like point out to some of them: trust towards the other is a condition of human communication; it is a link between people; feeling confidence to the other, the subject is oriented to the reciprocity; the main conditions of trust exertion are the real value of the other and his undoubted safety. Socio-psychological phenomenon of trust is impossible to understand, «describing different kinds of trust exertion in the structure of the interpersonal interaction, because it disappears plunging into several other phenomena of interpersonal interaction». Though it is absolutely clear that it is relatively independent psychological phenomenon. It manifests itself in the communication and activity, but it comes out from the inner subject state towards people in general and a concrete person particularly. The particularities of expressing trust to a concrete person depend on previous experience, on cultural values and traditions, effecting mentality.

If the subject is sure or thinks that the other is able to share his values then

in this specific situation he will trust this concrete person. The sphere of values that they share determines corresponding confidential information.



The specific form of emotion and value attitude to the other is the trust. The particular qualities of this relation are selective and partial features of this phenomenon, «in our social mind they manifest themselves in our choice who is worth to be trusted and what to trust this person » [6; 36]. Understanding of psychological nature of trust is possible if we only consider the diad person – person as a unique system, in which every compound outside this system represents the autonomous subject of the activity. Moreover, this situation of subject-subject relations suggests the attitude towards the other through Self which is the basis of developing the confidential relations. So, «trust develops thanks to complicated reflexive mechanisms, which are regarded in psychology as a specific quality of interpersonal knowledge when the subject of perception reconstructs using different means the inner world of other people in his own conscious » [6; 37].

According to the words of V.F. Safonova «confidence in communication is a relatively independent socio-psychological phenomenon, independent from the fact whether the communicator and recipient are friends or not, they feel sympathy or antipathy towards each other, and it is certainly the subject of the special research» [4, p. 264].

Confidential communication as a phenomenon is determined, on the one hand, by the information significance, material, revealed in the conversation, and on the other hand, by the confidential relation of the partner. It turns out that confidential communication is the communication that meets both mentioned conditions.

As trust is revealing of confidential information, it is evident that a certain psychological barrier arises and it is necessary to overcome it. Some specific conditions are necessary to launch basic elements of self-disclosure, they help to overcome barriers.

It is easier to overcome these difficulties if the subject perceives the conversation circumstances suitable for confidential communication. And first of all, as we believe, the compounds of these circumstances are the elements of expressive behavior.

Trust, demonstrated by the interlocutor under these circumstances, may play the role of starting mechanism, stimulating trust response, because it is the confirmation of correctly interpreted situation by the subject: it is adequate for trust exchange. Perhaps, one of such favourable conditions, leading to trust, is the resemblance of the interlocutor, the element of «the mirror». These elements can be any forms of behavior showing to the subject that his interlocutor trusts him.

Referring to the question about confidential information, its disclosure in confidential relations, it is necessary to dwell on gender differences as subjective assessment of information significance and its non-verbal expression. A number of scientists underline that there is a big difference in subjective assessment of human acts and the subjective importance of different personal qualities vary distinctly among people. The comparison using this parameter among men and women discovered that it is more important on the value scales for women the relation that people display to the other than for men. They are subjectively more significant. For men are relatively



more important everything connected to their work. Besides, interaction with people and all the sphere of relations are subjectively of great importance for women. And as consequence their social perceptive abilities are more

developed: women are able to catch the state of the other person by the timbre changes or other signs of his expressive behavior, they more completely reflect his appearance, more accurately assess their own influence on the other person and etc.

The scholar Antsifrova L.I. writes, that "psychodynamic characteristics and personal traits distinctly manifest themselves in specific poses and dynamic of their changes" [1]. To illustrate this idea, she gives as an example, the non-verbal pattern of the man, having confidence into social world. The specific gestures that form this pattern are the gestures directed towards the partner, particularly, subject's calm postural pose, an open palm, a bit moving aside hand and etc. It means that the component of direction towards the partner is obligatory for open, confidential communication.

In the book «Psychology of deficiency communication» (Labounskaya V.A., Menzheritskaya U.A., Breus E.D.) the authors examine and determine non-verbal patterns of the subjects of efficiency and deficiency communication. So, « the general non-verbal pattern of the subject of the deficiency communication includes frequent, intensive visual contact, obeying the rules according to the roles of the communicator or recipient; we can observe «curtailed» eye contact, frequent, quick glances at the partner, and also rather persistent research of the partner's look; eyes warm and tender. Poses are harmonic, they are synchronized and identical to partner's poses; poses are active, but they are unstressed, but they are not relaxed; they are directed to the partner. The gestures are not intensive, adequate to the situation of communication. Face expression takes the forms of friendship, curiosity, attention, trust. Proxemics are regulated according to the situation of communication» [2, p. 147]. It was noted that, positive partner's expectations produce changes in non-verbal behavior of the interlocutor, «they lead to tension release, sympathy strengthening, and correspondingly, to the changes of non-verbal interaction» [2].

The most important tasks of the carried out research were: definition of nonverbal characteristics, which are compounds of patterns of the confidential communication, separation and analysis of non-verbal patterns of trust and mistrust in the groups of men and women and finding out gender differences in trust display.

We can distinguish some substructures demonstrating big or small differences of using trust and mistrust, applying the indices of differences existing in the choice of non-verbal characteristics of non-verbal behavior in two experimental groups.

The received gradation allows to make a preliminary conclusion that the most important things letting recognize trust and mistrust relations in interpersonal interaction (illustrated by the example of diad) are:

1. Presence or absence of tactile contact, different kinds of touches;
2. Patterns and valence of expressions;
3. Laughter or crying as non-verbal expressive compounds.

Naturally, we do not mean, that poses and gestures of the subjects do not influ-



ence the situation of demonstrating trust or mistrust. We point out that after making the analysis of substructures of non-verbal behavior, that demonstrate big differences according to the results counted within experimental groups, it will be easier to come to a conclusion about type of relations between the subjects, whether there is or there is no trust in their relations. That is to say, to assess confidential relations we distinguish three substructures (touches, facial expressions, extra linguistics) and they are of primary importance.

In the frame of situation of the confidential interaction we discovered three complete structures-patterns of non-verbal expression, indicated as: emotional and facial expression, intimate touches and active pantomime. The factor analysis, was made in two directions – from the point of view of the observer and from the point of view of the subject, it didn't allow finding significant differences in the structure of the factors, as well as in interpretation of their socio-psychological meaning. It makes possible to say that there is no significant distinction in the assessment by the subject of his own non-verbal expression of trust and partner's confidential behavior.

The important fact is the absence of these distinctions in expressing and perceiving non-verbal patterns in the situations of mistrust. The complex of elements of non-verbal behavior, forming the first factor in the situation of mistrust, gives to the received pattern its psychological sense: positional relaxation, loud speech, the use of gestures, empathizing the words, different facial expressions, visual contact. All the above-mentioned elements symbolize at a certain stage demonstrative traits, showing them. The contradiction of the elements, showing relaxation, on one hand, (relaxed pose, to sit leaning back) and on the other hand tension (to speak loudly, to sit, bending forward), doesn't let to interpret the cumulative value of the factor as openness and spontaneity of non-verbal behavior. The combination of the described elements of non-verbal behavior with glance direction towards interlocutor (to look at the face, to look at the body), but not in his eyes, can be considered as «general demonstrative trait».

The next factor contains elements of non-verbal behavior that, complementing each other, do not only form sense dissonance, but only enhance general psychological sense of the whole pattern. This pattern is made from the characteristics, principally attributed to facial expression substructure of non-verbal behavior: to laugh, to express joy, to express admiration, to express surprise, to express love. Similar combination of non-verbal components, as we stated before, in major part of the researches and dictionaries of non-verbal behavior are characterized as the state of joy. In our case, the element, having bigger factor load – “laugh”, it means first of all to express his own emotional state, demonstrate. In this connection, we believe, the sense core of this factor is «active joy expression».

The third significant element of expressing mistrust by non-verbal means, consists mainly of characteristics, describing the absence of the visual contact and his restriction (to remove one's eyes, not to look into the eyes), tension, shown by the pose, the expression of anger, disgust. In field of psychological meanings of this pattern there



are characteristics that were already studied in the above-mentioned researches; they can be regarded as the compounds of deficiency communication [3, p. 238]. Such compounds as tense pose, the expression of disgust, the expression of anger, in our opinion, testify against the aggressiveness and negativism. In this reference, this factor received the title «visual contact restriction and tension».

As to concrete differences between men and women in non-verbal expression of trust let's refer to the data of our research.

The results of the factor analysis allow distinguishing three essential compounds of non-verbal behavior expressing trust among men and women. The first factor, characterizing male non-verbal expression of trust includes the following elements: to put hands on shoulders, neck and etc; to hug; to kiss; to use other touches; to take hands; to express love, admiration and others. The order of the enumeration of the characteristics of non-verbal behavior corresponds to the factor load of the elements that also influences socio-psychological sense of this factor in whole. This factor corresponds to the pattern of the confidential behavior "Intimate touches and emotionality", that's why there is no need to determine it separately as a male behavior index.

The psychological field of the second factor is determined by the following characteristics: to express suffering, fear, anger; to cry; to use gestures underlining the above said; to touch face, to express surprise and etc. Therewith the compounds of this pattern, having the biggest load, describe, essentially, negative emotional states, and crying. According to our theoretical analysis, expressing sufferings and crying – this is the example of behavior, which is prescribed in Russian culture more often to women than men. However, the described characteristics of non-verbal behavior are assigned to the male arsenal in the studies of non-verbal expression of trust towards the other. The second factor we designated as «the expression of negative emotional state».

The last discovered factor, describing non-verbal expression of trust among the men is very similar to the pattern of mistrust «general demonstrative trait». Both these factors contain the following characteristics: to look into the face; to sit leaning back; to speak loudly; to gesticulate intensively; to use gestures, expressing relation. Similar features, first of all, mean the ambiguity of the interpretation of this pattern, and secondly, it means that men use demonstrative acts to express trust as well as mistrust. Under these circumstances there is a need to examine the additional elements of non-verbal behavior, unique to the situation of interpersonal interaction.

As the compounds of the first pattern of trust in female behavior we can name the characteristics of facial expressions and touches, constituents of non-verbal behavior substructures: to hug; to use touches; to put hands on the shoulders, neck and etc; to look at the body; kiss; express surprise, suffering, love; link arm in arm; cry; to take hands and etc. The elements as touches and facial expressions have the biggest factor and sense load, so we can name this pattern as «intimate touches and emotionality».

Besides, from the point of view of members of the group "women", confidential behavior includes such characteristics: to laugh; to sit, leaning back; gesticulate intensively; a relaxed pose; to look into the eyes; to express admiration, disgust, joy, anger;



to use gestures, expressing attitude and etc.

The third non-verbal pattern of confidential behavior is specific for women group, and, from our point of view, eloquently describes female type of non-verbal behavior. It combines characteristics that, if we look at them separately, can become elements trust and mistrust non-verbal behavior. However their combination evokes some particular psychological sense. These are characteristics, created the third non-verbal, «absolutely female» pattern: draw aside the look after meeting eye, to use other facial expressions, to speak loudly, to look into the face. The combination of the elements of this non-verbal behavior pattern can be considered as “coquetry” intrinsic mainly to women.

Thus, according to the received data and the carried out comparative analysis of non-verbal behavior patterns, created for the groups of trustful and trustless respondents, and also, for men and women separately, we can make the preliminary conclusion: statistically significant distinctions in the patterns of non-verbal behavior between trustful and trustless people, appear because of preferences in the choice of some or other elements of non-verbal behavior, even if they are parts of the same substructure, they have different psychological sense and they distinguish themselves by “exterior drawing”.

Analyzing the similarities and distinctions of non-verbal trust expression between men and women, we arrived at the following conclusions: men’s nonverbal trust expression has some distinctions from women’s nonverbal trust expression; a non-verbal pattern of trust expression, intrinsic to men and women, is the pattern of «intimate touches and emotionality»; unlike women, men, expressing trust, are able to display «negative emotions” and demonstrative traits; the characteristic elements of female confidential behavior are «joy expression and active facial expressions», well known as “coquetry”.

We have also made analysis of the frequency of choice of the characteristics of non-verbal behavior in the situation of trust for four groups: masculine men, androgynous men, androgynous women, and feminine women.

Analyzing the frequency of choice of the characteristics of non-verbal behavior in experimental groups we managed to discover those ones used in every group. They are the joy expression, laughter, eye contact and hugs. Please remember that the above- mentioned characteristics occupy top positions on the frequency scale; they are popular elements of trust expression to the other by non-verbal means. The quantity of characteristics of non-verbal behavior that can be found in the top quartile

In all 4 groups is on average 6-7 items, though the group of androgynous women comes up to 12 that, in our view, testifies this group has the most diversified repertory. The androgynous women often use the same non-verbal characteristics of trust chosen by androgynous men, masculine men, as well as feminine women: to express love; to sit leaning back; a relaxed pose; to take hands, to kiss, to express admiration. It is necessary to note that the differences in choices of non-verbal characteristics in 4 groups of respondents are rather small and they do not change the sense of the



patterns.

The important features of trust non-verbal expression among masculine men are that they use only "hugs" from all the elements of touch substructure. Other experimental groups use kisses, hug and hand contact. The androgynous men and masculine men, do not use kisses, it proves once more that kiss for men is a ritual form and they do not use it in the situation of trust.

Gathering the results of the analysis, taking into consideration gender differences, we came to a conclusion that they are statistically significant in non-verbal expression of trust. To describe them we have chosen the parameters of intensity and distance. So the groups of the feminine and androgynous women, expressing trust, are more active and use more often touches. (to kiss, to take hands). The groups of masculine and androgynous men are more distant and passive, moreover the group of androgynous men is characterized by big behavior similarity with feminine and androgynous women. The group of the masculine men occupy just opposite positions according to intensity and distance scales. In other words only masculine men do not use such elements of physical contact as, «to take hands» and «kiss».

Thus, using received experimental data and their analysis, we managed to study in details the question of non-verbal expression of trust towards the other, to discover trust patterns and distinguish their gender differences.

The contemporary social psychology draws attention to the importance of the patterns and behavior stereotypes in the regulation of social, socio-psychological processes in the society. Their importance consists in socio-psychological functions: regulation, identification, stratification, adaptation as well as in socio-psychological demonstration of relation towards Self, self-acceptance and expectations of certain behavior from the others. In the frame of our research, we appealed to interactive trend of non-verbal behavior psychology that has the aim to describe stable characteristics of non-verbal patterns in social communication. The received empirical data completely prove that the patterns of non-verbal communication include a whole complex of components: acts towards the partner and away from the partner, visual contact and its absence, mutual touches or absolute space alienation [3, p. 433].

However, it is necessary to remember that non-verbal patterns are dynamic traits, affected by socio-cultural variables, and the idea about universality of nonverbal patterns of expressing emotions, feelings and relations, is quite relative.

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