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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ МАНІПУЛЯТИВНОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ В ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОМУ
ВИМІРІ

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CHARACTERISTICS OF MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOR IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL
CONTEXT

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This article examines the psychological characteristics of manipulative behavior. It analyzes the main theoretical approaches to understanding the nature of manipulation in interpersonal interaction. It identifies the key psychological factors that contribute to the formation of manipulative strategies, including personality traits, emotional intelligence, and an individual's social experience. It is noted that manipulative behavior manifests itself through covert influence, the use of psychological techniques, and the pursuit of one's own goals at the expense of others. The role of communication skills and the socio-psychological context in the emergence and maintenance of manipulation is emphasized. Special attention is given to the consequences of manipulative behavior for interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being. The study's findings highlight the need to develop critical thinking and psychological awareness as means of countering manipulative influence.

Keywords: *manipulative behavior, psychological influence, interpersonal interaction, personality traits, emotional intelligence, communication strategies, psychological defense mechanisms.*

Manipulation is a form of influence that requires considerable skill and knowledge. Of course, there are talented natural-born individuals with powerful intuition who are capable of manipulating the minds of those around them using improvised means. But the scope of their actions is limited, confined to personal influence - within the family, a work crew, a platoon, or a gang. When it comes to public consciousness, however, specialists are typically brought in, or at least specialized knowledge drawn from literature or manuals is required. Since the manipulation of public consciousness has become a technology, professionals who master this technology have emerged. A system of personnel training, scientific institutions, and scientific and popular science literature have emerged.

Over a long period of time, knowledge about manipulation - as a form of covert psychological influence - has accumulated through everyday experience and artistic works, and has become the subject of scientific research. It should be noted that in the modern world, the role of coercive methods of compulsion (political,

legal, economic, social, religious, and other forms of control) has significantly diminished, giving way to various forms of persuasion, covert control, implicit dependence, social alienation, and so on [1;2].

Various aspects of the phenomenon of manipulation - including the mechanisms, techniques, criteria, and factors underlying manipulative behavior - have been examined by foreign and domestic scholars: E. Berne, J. Rudinov, E. Fromm, E. Shostrom, A. Ellis, O. Connor, D. Martin, G. Schiller, S. Bratchenko, E. Dotsenko, G. Grachev, T. Kabachenko, S. Kara-Murza, G. Kovalyov, I. Melnik, V. Pankratov, O. Sidorenko, V. Tatenko, and others.

The term «manipulation» has both a literal and a metaphorical meaning. The word «manipulation» (from the Latin *manipulare*) has long meant, in a strictly positive sense, «to manage with expertise». A transitional stage toward the metaphorical meaning was the use of this term in reference to performing various sleight-of-hand tricks and card games in which, in addition to skill, the concealment of actions or true intentions is valued, as well as the use of all sorts of distracting techniques that divert the observer's attention. Subsequently, manipulation began to be understood (in a figurative sense) as the desire to «get one's hands on», «lure into a trap», or «attempt to turn a person into an obedient tool, a puppet». Subsequently, the metaphor of manipulation was supplemented with the following characteristics: the skill of execution and the creation in a person of the illusion of autonomy in the decisions made and actions taken.

Today, manipulation is employed in the context of interpersonal relationships and in the sphere of mass consciousness management. M. Babiuk notes that manipulation exists at the intersection of many social relationships, intersecting with such phenomena of human life as social management, cooperation, rivalry, and so on. A pressing issue in defining the essence of manipulation is that it varies across different approaches; the author's position significantly shapes the definition of the concept's core meaning. As far back as the last century, Le Bon (recently dubbed «the Machiavelli of mass society») wrote: «The crowd thinks in images, and an image evoked in its imagination in turn evokes others that have no logical connection

to the first... The crowd is capable of thinking only in images, receptive only to images. Only images can... become the driving forces behind its actions». Elsewhere, he returns to the connection between words and images: «The power of words lies in their close connection to images and is entirely independent of their actual meaning. Very often, words with the most vague meanings have the greatest influence on the crowd. Such terms as democracy, socialism, equality, freedom, and so on, for example, are so vague that even in thick volumes it is impossible to explain their meaning with precision».

Comics - short, simplified texts in which each passage is accompanied by an illustration - proved to be a brilliant invention for conveying messages to people who were not accustomed to reading. Having become an integral part of American popular culture, comics were, at the same time, a powerful ideological tool until the advent of television. One could say that the entire history of modern American ideology is inextricably intertwined with the history of comics. The phenomenon of comics, wrote cultural theorist Umberto Eco, lies in the fact that comics «gave rise to a unique phenomenon - mass culture, in which the proletariat accepts the cultural models of the bourgeoisie with the full conviction that this is its own independent self-expression».

Manipulative behavior is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon that reflects an individual's desire to exert covert influence on others in order to achieve their own goals. In Ukrainian psychology, manipulation is traditionally viewed as a form of implicit influence that involves the use of psychological tactics without the target's awareness. In the works of Ukrainian researchers, manipulative behavior is linked to an individual's personality orientation and moral attitudes. In particular, it is emphasized that manipulation arises in situations of value imbalance, when the pursuit of personal gain takes precedence over the ethical norms of interpersonal interaction. The level of developed reflection and self-regulation plays an important role.

In Ukrainian psychology, the issue of manipulative behavior is examined through the lens of interpersonal interaction and an individual's moral and value

orientations. In particular, O. L. Dotsenko defines manipulation as a covert psychological influence aimed at changing another person's behavior without their awareness or consent. A similar position is held by S. G. Kara-Murza, who emphasizes the conscious aspect of manipulation and its connection to control over the individual.

T. Titarenko's works emphasize that manipulative behavior develops within the context of an individual's life experiences and value orientations, and can also serve as a means of psychological adaptation in complex social conditions. At the same time, S. Maksymenko emphasizes the role of personal development and self-regulation in shaping the ability to engage in constructive or destructive interaction with others.

Within the framework of personality trait theory, D. Paulhus and K. Williams have made a significant contribution by proposing the concept of the «dark triad» of personality. It includes Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy as core predictors of manipulative behavior. In this model, Machiavellianism is viewed as a tendency to strategically and coldly exploit others to achieve one's own goals, which is directly linked to manipulative tactics in interpersonal interactions.

The study by March et al. deepens this understanding by showing that manipulative strategies, particularly gaslighting, are closely linked to an individual's personality traits. The authors argue that individuals with high levels of Machiavellianism and emotional coldness are more likely to use tactics that distort reality, lower their partner's self-esteem, and undermine their partner's confidence in their own perceptions [4].

Research on emotional intelligence is also an important area of study. The work of Haag, Poirier, and Bellinghausen emphasizes that emotional intelligence has a dual nature: on the one hand, it promotes effective communication and empathy, and on the other, it can be used as a tool for covert influence. A high level of understanding of other people's emotions allows a manipulator to more accurately identify the other person's vulnerabilities and apply appropriate psychological strategies [2].

International research by Grieve and Panebianco also confirms that manipulative behavior is often based on a combination of cognitive empathy and low affective empathy. This means that an individual may understand others' emotions well but not experience them, which creates conditions for the instrumental use of social interactions [4].

In a socio-psychological context, Bricheag et al. define manipulative strategies as a component of interpersonal interaction that can be used both to achieve individual goals and to control the behavior of others within groups. The authors emphasize that manipulation is often covert in nature and relies on the exploitation of trust and emotional involvement [1].

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