

**„ION CREANGĂ” STATE PEDAGOGICAL
UNIVERSITY OF CHIȘINĂU**

With manuscript title

U.D.C: 59.942.5-053.4/.6(043.3)=111

RACU IULIA

**PSYCHOLOGY OF ANXIETY
IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

**511.02. DEVELOPMENT PSYCHOLOGY AND
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Summary to the Thesis of Habilitated Doctor of Psychology

CHIȘINĂU, 2020

The thesis was elaborated within the Department of Psychology of „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chişinău

Componence of Thesis Defense Board (approved by the Order no. 191 from 07.09.2020):

Jelescu Petru, President, Habilitated Doctor of Psychology, University Professor, „Ion Creangă” SPU, Chişinău

Losîi Elena, scientific secretary, Doctor of Psychology, Associate Professor, „Ion Creangă” SPU, Chişinău

Bolboceanu Aglaida, member, Habilitated Doctor of Psychology, Researcher Professor, ESI, Chişinău

Borozan Maia, member, Habilitated Doctor of Pedagogy, University Professor, TSU, Chişinău

Bucun Nicolae, member, Habilitated Doctor of Psychology, University Professor, ESI, Chişinău

Ciorbă Constantin, member, Habilitated Doctor of Pedagogy, University Professor, „Ion Creangă” SPU, Chişinău

Constantin Ticu, member, Doctor of Psychology, University Professor, UAIC, Iaşi

Guţu Vladimir, member, Habilitated Doctor of Pedagogy, University Professor, MSU, Chişinău

Platon Carolina, member, Habilitated Doctor of Pedagogy, University Professor, MSU, Chişinău

The defense will take place on November 6, 2020, at 12:00 within the meeting of Habilitated Doctor Thesis Defense Board at „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chişinău, address: 1 I. Creangă St., bl. 2, Senate Hall.

The Habilitated Doctor thesis and the Summary can be consulted at the Scientific Library of „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chişinău and on ANACEC web-page (www.cnaa.md).

The summary was delivered on October 2, 2020.

Scientific secretary of Thesis Defense Board
Doctor of Psychology, Associate Professor

Losîi Elena

Author
Doctor of Psychology, Associate Professor

Racu Iulia

CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES OF THE RESEARCH

The actuality and importance of the addressed subject. In the century in which we live the importance of anxiety studies significantly increases. The complexity of the problems which are imposed by the study of the anxiety are multiple and are more and more signaled and vivid both on global and national level.

An alarming reality of the moment, according to World Health Organization is the great number of people affected by anxiety and depression, which is increasing. The WHO experts mention that „a problem of proportions” referring to the significant increase of the adults with mental health problems in future will appear, if urgent measures to help children and adolescents who present anxiety manifestations will not be taken [19, 20].

The meta-analytical studies suggest that anxiety within the general population significantly increased during the last 40 years. The exposed results are also valid for the population represented by children and adolescents. Thus, with all the exposed during the last years, a primary objectives of mental health policies around the world is the well-being emotional and social state of children and adolescents [19].

The presence of the anxiety, as well as the imbalances at the level of human mental health well-being state are determined by the *new realities*: profound and important changes in the life of society and of the human being in particular: the development of modern technologies computerization, information excess, mass-media, internet, social networking impact [12, 13, 17].

Besides the above mentioned transformations, in Republic of Moldova there are other wide-spread phenomena which are considered a drama of the modern times – massive migration of the young population to work abroad, which gets to the disintegration of the family and to the considerable growth of the number of divorces and consequently to one-parent families. At the same time, the changes encountered now, affect the complete family as well. The problems the parents confront with are multiple and more and more grave: disorientation and/or confusion, the acute feeling of loneliness and depression, social insecurity, borderline situations, relationship difficulties, frequent conflicting situations between spouses, verbal and physical violence [13, 14]. The consequences described imply the increase of the number of children and adolescents deprived of parental affection, love, protection and security, triggering an unfavorable development of affection. In such conditions, one cannot wonder why we witness such an unheard increase of mental and psycho-social problems, including anxiety [17].

Anxiety starts in the childhood and is present during the whole life. At children and adolescents, the anxiety manifests itself differently compared to adults [22]. Anxiety is one of the emotional problems most frequently encountered at children and adolescents, representing also the main cause for which children and their families request help within mental health services [10].

Among all the negative feelings of a child and of an adolescent, the anxiety has a special place, often getting to behavior inhibition, to the own resources impairment, to the decrease of learning capacity, of activity productivity, to difficulties in communication and social functioning [17]. Moreover, one can often underline other problems of emotional and behavioral health at children and adolescents with anxiety: attention deficit disorders, hyperactivity, depression, etc.

The course of anxiety development is not an encouraging one, there are empirical proofs which support the idea that the anxiety manifested during the childhood and adolescence continues and persists most often at adulthood as well. It is important to focus on and to intervene early in case of anxiety, this being beneficial for adults' functioning. The untreated at the right time anxiety can intensify and be present as clinical manifestation and most frequently will condition the appearance of depression.

Description of the situation in research area and the identification of research problem. The problem of the anxiety most frequently becomes research subject within modern sciences as: medicine, physiology, philosophy, sociology, psychiatry and psychology. In psychology the problem of anxiety arose the interest of many researchers, namely: A. Adler, B. M. Астапов, D. Ausubel, D. Barlow, R. Cattell, C. Ciofu, Б. И. Кочубей, R. Doron, A. Freud, S. Freud, E. Fromm, Г. Ш. Габдреева, K. Goldstein, Ю. Л. Ханин, I. Holdevici, K. Horney, C. Izard, М. Ю. Колпакова, G. Kelly, H. Liddell, R. Martens, R. May, I. Mitrofan, E. B. Новикова, F. Parot, И. П. Павлов, F. Perls, P. Popescu-Neveanu, A. M. Прихожан, W. Reich, F. Robinson, V. Robu, C. Rogers, Ch. Spielberger, H. Sullivan, В. В. Суворова, U. Şchiopu, J. Watson, J. Wolpe and A. И. Захаров, etc. [13, 14].

More and more frequently, in contemporary psychology is present the research referring to the anxiety characteristic to children and adolescents. Important and valuable contributions in this field are represented by the investigations realized by B. M. Астапов, A. Bacus, E. Bourne, Б. И. Кочубей, J. Eckersleyd, A. Iordan, D. Keating, A. В. Микляева, I. Mitrofan, A. Munteanu, M. Neagoe, E. B. Новикова, D. Papalia, G. Pănişoară, A. M. Прихожан, L. Reid, П. В. Румянцева, U. Şchiopu, E. Verza, A. И. Захаров etc. [13, 14, 17].

The result of the studies devoted to anxiety in child and adolescents are incontestable. The majority of the investigations from the field are oriented to establishing the level of anxiety in children and adolescents (G. Adams, M. Berzonsky, D. Keating, A. B. Микляева, А. М. Прихожан, П. В. Румянцева). Some researches fragmentary represent the types of anxiety manifestation at children and adolescents (B. M. Астапов, M. Boza, F. Golu, Б. И. Кочубей, Е. В. Новикова, G. Pănișoară, D. Petrovăi, A. M. Прихожан, L. Reid, V. Robu, Ch. Spielberger, R. Vrasti) and only episodically describe the anxiety implications in other psychological variables (temperamental predictors, intellectual abilities, emotions, self-appreciation and the level of aspirations) (I. Holdevici, R. Holic, I. Țincaș, L. Vasilescu) and personality features of anxious children and adolescents (R. Duskin Feldman, J. Eckersleyd, P. Galimard, D. Papalia, A. M. Прихожан, L. Reyd, S. Wendkos Olds) [13, 14].

Even though in international psychological literature, the anxiety is in researchers' attention from the beginning of the past century, it is relatively recent among the preoccupations of the researchers from our country. Our own doctoral thesis „Anxiety in contemporary preadolescents and ways of its reduction” comprises: the analysis of dynamics, of the specific features, of the types and sources of the anxiety of the preadolescents from Republic of Moldova, underlines the personality features of the preadolescents with severe anxiety, as well as a complex psychological intervention program oriented to diminishing of school anxiety of 10 – 12 year – old children. The realized experimental approach allowed the delineation of a complex psychological portrait of the anxious preadolescent which is beneficial in the process of his harmonious development [14].

In Republic of Moldova, anxiety was investigated by N. Toma, in the doctoral thesis „Features of academic anxiety-cognitive styles interaction in students”; the author presents and establishes the features of the academic anxiety and cognitive styles interaction in students, but also suggests and describes ways of reducing the anxiety through psychological and educational mechanisms [21].

At the same time, in the studies realized by the author P. Jelescu were identified and described other dimensions of the anxiety, such as: restlessness appears in child in the context of denial [5], as soon as A. Verdeș mentions that enhanced anxiety of the preadolescents is conditioned by the specifics of communication and interaction of the preadolescents with the adult from the temporary disintegrated family, as well as by the way of education and authoritarian interaction from the boarding school [23].

Following the above mentioned, we ascertain the problem of anxiety in childhood and adolescence *in the context of new social realities* insufficiently investigated. The facts exposed, thus, generate **the problem of the research** which constitutes the formulation of the response to the following question: *How can anxiety and its diminishing at different age levels be theoretically and experimentally grounded in the context of new social realities?*

The purpose of the research consists in *theoretical and experimental grounding of the phenomenon of anxiety at different age levels in the context of new social realities, as well as the configuration of a new psychological intervention model oriented to diminishing anxiety in preschoolers through the prism of implications on its conditioning factors with the possibility of its extension to other ages as well.*

The purpose of the research was reflected by the following **objectives**:

1. analysis and study of specialized literature regarding anxiety, the methods and instruments of anxiety and its correlates diagnosis, and the techniques, procedures and ways of anxiety diminishing;
2. underlining gender and age differences in anxiety manifestation and anxiety types at children and adolescents;
3. establishing gender and age features in manifesting school / academic anxiety and school anxiety factors at junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents;
4. identification of psycho-social factors (family composition and climate) and of the individual ones (self-assessment, self-confidence, social courage, initiation of social contacts) determining anxiety at preschool, early school, preadolescence and adolescence periods;
5. identification of personality traits typical to junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents with distinct levels of anxiety;
6. elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the psychological intervention program effectiveness regarding anxiety reduction in preschoolers;
7. elaboration of the scientific concept regarding the development of anxiety in children and adolescents in the context of new social realities.

The theoretical support of the research targets: *the theories regarding anxiety* (B. M. Астапов, R. Cattell, I. Holdevici, A. M. Прихожан, Ch. Spielberger); *the theories regarding the types of the anxiety* (R. Cattell, Ю. Л. Ханин, А. В. Микляева, B. Phillips, A. M. Прихожан, V. Robu, П. В. Румянцева, Ch. Spielberger); *the psychological concepts regarding the features and specifics of preschool age, junior school age, preadolescence and adolescence* (A. Bacus, E. Badea, F. Golu, D. Papalia, G. Pănișoară, I. Racu, U. Șchiopu, E. Verza, F. Verza, Л. С.

ВЫГОТСКИЙ) *and the investigations regarding anxiety at preschool, junior school, preadolescence and adolescence levels* (G. Adams, M. Berzonsky, P. Gallimard, B. M. Астапов, J. Eckersleyd, L. Mitrofan, G. Pănișoară, A. M. Прихожан, L. Reid, U. Șchiopu, A. Verdeș).

Scientific research methodology discerns from the purpose and the objectives of the ascertaining and formative approach and is constituted from theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis of specialized literature; hypothetic-deductive method for the interpretation and explanation of the obtained results within the research); empirical methods (observation, conversation, the test, the inventory and the questionnaire, ascertainment and control experiment, psychological interventions); mathematical and statistical methods (method of Pearson linear correlation coefficient calculation, U Mann-Whitney test, χ^2 test, T-Student test and Wilcoxon test)

The novelty and originality of research results consists in:

1. theoretical and experimental grounding of the anxiety phenomenon at different age levels in the context of new social realities based on the investigation of gender and age differences in anxiety manifestation (school anxiety / academic anxiety), of psychosocial and individual factors determining it and of personality traits of the anxious child and adolescent;
2. building a definition with integratory character of the concept of anxiety deduced from the analysis of existing approaches and explanations aimed at realizing a reconsidering of all the definitions;
3. establishing the specific character of anxiety, re-dimensioning the ways of anxiety manifestation (situational anxiety and anxiety as a trait), underlining integrative interaction of its determining factors and of the features of personality traits modelling in the context of development from preschool stage to adolescence;
4. conceptualizing a psycho-diagnosis model for integrated and deep study of anxiety and its correlates at different development stages;
5. prospecting a psychological portrait of the child and adolescent with anxiety, based on an integrative approach of constructive regularities and mechanisms of anxiety and its correlates;
6. conceiving and validation of a new psychological interventions model oriented to diminishing anxiety in preschoolers through the prism of the implications on the conditioning factors and with the possibility of extending it to other ages.

The scientific results which led to the development of a new research direction consist in the fact that for the first time one grounded a holistic vision of anxiety in the context of the new social realities deduced from the approach to age and gender and of its determining factors (psycho-social and individual factors). We elucidated in a complex way the phenomenon of anxiety through integrating distinct gender and age features in its evolution and nature. We also grounded anxiety through the prism of investigation of the distinct ways of its manifestation (situational anxiety: restlessness, concerns and fears, at preschoolers and juniors, school anxiety / academic anxiety in junior pupils, preadolescents and adolescents, and the anxiety – a trait of preadolescents and adolescents). We also established the specific character of the anxiety within the integrative context of the family factors interaction (family structure and climate) and of personality components (self-appreciation, self-confidence, social courage, social contacts initiation). From the category of new results, we can refer to the elaboration of the psychological portrait of the child and adolescent with anxiety which constitutes the recognition criteria of anxiety in them. A special place was attributed to the design, organization and development of the innovative model of psychological interventions regarding diminishing anxiety oriented to psycho-social and individual factors which condition it through the inclusion of the important adults from preschooler's life: parents and educators within informative and developmental sessions and favoring the development of preschooler's personality components (self-awareness: self-appreciation and self-confidence). The originality of the obtained results within the present research determined the creation of a new scientific direction: ***Integrated approach of anxiety research at different age stages.***

The theoretical significance of the investigation is emphasized by:

- grounding a theory of anxiety based on: holistic definition and conceptualizing of it from preschool to adolescence level from the perspective of gender, age, distinct ways of manifestation, of synthesis of determining factors (psycho-social and individual) and of modifications in personality traits;
- conceptualization of the anxiety phenomenon through the prism of its explanatory lawfulness and mechanisms as an integrated part of the affective sphere and of the personality of the child and adolescent development;
- grounding the approach of development of affectivity and preschooler's personality key elements oriented to anxiety diminishing with its extension to subsequent ages of development;

- the development of a new theory regarding anxiety in children and adolescents together with the psycho-diagnostic model and that of psychological interventions suggested for the assessment and diminishing of the anxiety complete and enrich the theoretical fundamentals of the psychological science with ample knowledge.

The applicative value of the work is designated by:

- conceptualizing a methodology of diagnostic and examination of the anxiety which can also be extended in the investigation of the affective sphere and that of the personality applicable at individual and group level to children and adolescents;
- the validation of the psychological intervention model based on the implications on anxiety conditioning factors, constituted of expressive-creative techniques and relaxation exercises, meditations and other types of practices like mindfulness for diminishing in an original and innovative manner both anxiety and different problems from the area of affective sphere and that of the personality at preschoolers and children of other ages;
- the possibility, experimentally proved, by the valorization in the national system of psychological assistance / support of the psycho-diagnostic and psychological intervention models regarding study and diminishing anxiety at different age;
- underlining the features of the anxiety and of the problems correlated with it allows the determination of the essential directions for the optimization of emotional and personality development of children and adolescents;
- formulating a set of recommendations for parents and academic staff referring to diminishing anxiety and related problems at children and adolescents;
- the experimental results and research conclusions can be used while reconsidering the existent ideas and concepts referring to the development of the affective sphere at different age stages as well as while elaborating the section The Psychic Development and Personality Development within the subject Development Psychology and of the standards regarding the examination of the anxiety and its diminishing within educational institutions.

Main scientific results forwarded for the defense:

1. Anxiety is frequently encountered at children and adolescents and knows a particular development depending on age, gender and changes in psycho-social and individual factors, and is accompanied by configurations in personality traits with more emphasized manifestations during preschool stage with a higher incidence among girls.
2. Anxiety in children and adolescents manifests itself on two dimensions: situational anxiety and anxiety as a trait. We encounter situational anxiety in preschoolers, junior

schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents, as soon as, the anxiety as a trait appears and manifests itself during preadolescence and adolescence. Situational anxiety is common at preschool stage and in junior school and has the shape of distinct restlessness, concerns and fears existing at these ages and is determined by new and changeable situations, circumstances and events. The presence of the situational anxiety at preschool, junior school stages and at the beginning of preadolescence conditions the anxiety as a trait to preadolescents and adolescents.

3. School anxiety / academic anxiety is common to junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents. The specific character of school anxiety / academic anxiety is outlined by gender, age and by development social situation; it presents a higher intensity at junior schoolchildren with a higher prevalence among girls. The increase of school anxiety is conditioned by the implications of psycho-social factors (feeling the social stress, the fear of not corresponding to the expectations of the people around, and problems and fears in relations with the teachers) and individual factors (the frustration of the need to be successful, the fear of self-affirmation, the fear of knowledge checking situations and low physiological resistance to stress).
4. Anxiety in children and adolescents is determined by a series of factors which are in interdependent dynamics: psycho-social factors (family structure and climate) and individual factors (self-appreciation, self-confidence, social courage, initiation of social contacts).
5. The level of anxiety in children and adolescents depends on a great variety of factors, features and conditions: temporarily disintegrated family, one-parent family, the features of family climate (development social situation), changes in personality components content (self-appreciation, self-confidence, social courage) and communication experience with peers.
6. The presence of the anxiety in children and adolescents produces modifications of personality, generating the following distinctive features: reserve, rigidity, tension, frustration, agitation, irritation, overwork, emotional character, addiction and affective immaturity, instability, susceptibility, sensitiveness, excessive caution, shyness, timorous attitude, inferiority feelings, own forces distrust, uncertain and restrained expression, exaggerated sensibility, need of group approval, obedience and modesty.
7. The psychological interventions specially organized in educational environment can positively influence the affectivity development of the preschooler, favoring the development of positive emotional habits, of key-elements of self-consciousness, development of

independent, active, confident, courageous behavior, elimination of the inhibitions, thus contributing to the reduction of the anxiety.

The implementation of scientific results. The theoretic-experimental results have been implemented within state programs and national projects *Psycho-social aspects of psychological security and its manifestations at social level in children* (2020 –), *Initial and continuous training of psychologists in the field of child protection against violence* (2015 – 2019), *The development of competences of psychological order within initial and continuous training of psychologists* (2011 – 2014), within Erasmus+ international mobility program (University of Granada, Spain, 2018; Kingston University, London, Great Britain, 2019), within the didactic process while training and forming Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students from the Psychology faculties of higher education institutions, within continuous training courses, within scientific-methodological seminars for school psychologist and counselors and teaching staff.

Approval of the research results. The research results have been discussed and approved within the meetings at the Department of Psychology of „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chişinău. The scientific value of the study have been presented and confirmed at national and international conferences: scientific conference *Actual problems of social-humanistic sciences and education modernization*, „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University (2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020), Chişinău, Moldova; International scientific conference *Education Sciences Institute: history, performance, personalities*, ESI, October 20 – 21, 2016, Chisinau, Moldova; International conference *E-TEAM PSYCHOLOGY Sharing students’ ideas and experience referring to the future of the research*, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iaşi, December 8 – 11, 2016, Iaşi, Romania; Scientific-practical international conferences devoted to the 26th anniversary from the foundation of State University of Comrat *Science, education culture*, State University of Comrat, February 10, 2017, Comrat, Moldova; Inter-district symposium *Home alone*, IVth edition, School center for inclusive education, June 9, 2017, Suceava, Romania; National Symposium with international participation *KREATIKON: Creativity-Formation-Performance*, Iaşi, Chişinău (2013, 2015, 2017, 2018) Iaşi, Romania, Chişinău, Moldova; Scientific conference *Perspectives and integration problems within European Area of research and education*, „Bogdan Petriceicu Hajdeu” State University of Cahul, June 7, 2018, Cahul, Moldova; Scientific-practical national conference with international participation *Continuous and initial training of the psychologists in the field of child protection without violence*, „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chişinău, October 26, 2018, Chişinău, Moldova; National scientific-practical conference *Modern tendencies in modern*

practical psychology, „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University, December 8, 2018 Chişinău, Moldova; International scientific conference *The psychology of the third millennium: challenges and solutions*, „Alec Russo” State University of Bălţi, October 25, 2019, Bălţi, Moldova; National scientific conference with international participation *Integration through research and innovation*, MSU, November, 7 – 8, 2019, Chişinău, Moldova.

Publications on thesis subject: 74 scientific works: among which: 2 monographs, 1 chapter in a monograph, 8 articles in scientific international issues, 11 articles in scientific magazines, 43 articles in conferences and other scientific events works, 1 manual, 2 syllabi and 6 guides.

Thesis size and structure. The thesis comprises the annotations, the list of abbreviations, an introduction, seven chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography of 276 titles, annexes, and consists of 256 pages, including 84 figures and 57 tables.

Keywords: anxiety, types of anxiety, school anxiety / academic anxiety, family, family climate, self-appreciation, personality traits, preschool age, junior school age, preadolescent age, adolescent age.

THESIS CONTENTS

In the **INTRODUCTION** we have stated the actuality and importance of the research subject, we have formulated the purpose, objectives and investigation hypotheses, we have explained and grounded the conceptual and methodological theoretical support of the research and we have presented a concise characteristic of the work.

Chapter 1 entitled „**ANXIETY: THEORETIC FRAMEWORK**” presents the theoretical substantiation of anxiety through: examination of conceptual delimitations of the anxiety and of explanatory theories considered relevant to the issues, the synthesis of the main modifications which accompany anxiety on biosomatic, physiological and psychological level, the description of intensity levels and of manifestation types of the anxiety. At the same time, in this chapter we have realized the synthesis referring the features of the anxiety in preschoolers, junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents integrating aspects referring to the development of physical, cognitive and psycho-social aspects.

The synthesis of latest scientific literature reflects that the anxiety represents a complex and dynamic phenomenon engraved by restlessness, agitation tension, fear, unjustified concern which manifests itself either as a state that appears in certain circumstances usually for a limited time duration which can be encountered in the life of each person, or as a personality trait which

is relatively constant, stable and does not depend on external life factors and circumstances [12, 14, 17].

The ample analysis of the conceptions referring to the transformations which are produced in the organism of the one that feels anxiety emphasizes upon the following ways and levels of its manifestation. The presence of the anxiety betrays a number of transformations at biological, affective, cognitive and behavioral level. Among the ways of anxiety manifestations, we can underline the subjective states which include the feeling of helplessness, self-doubt, lack of energy in front of the external factors which appear as exaggerated and threatening, diffuse fear of a real or imaginary danger, the expectation of failure etc. and the behavioral manifestations which include disorganized activity, diminished performance compared to the usual ones and tendencies to overcome discomfort through „protection mechanisms”. The levels of anxiety manifestations are as follows: reduced anxiety, moderate anxiety, and high level anxiety [12, 13, 14, 17].

The most important classifications regarding the types of anxiety outline: the anxiety-state, anxiety-trait, school anxiety / academic anxiety [26, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39].

The scientific approach regarding anxiety in children and adolescents shows that anxiety is one of the most frequent emotional problems of children and adolescents, with negative consequences, difficult to be immediately perceived, upon the wellbeing of the child and upon his daily functioning [1, 9, 15, 24]. The most evident negative consequences of the anxiety which interfere with child's quality of life are the level of autonomy in daily activities; several aspects are negatively affected: the school performance, the implication in school, extra-school development activities, self-confidence, the capacity to develop friendships, as well as satisfaction with his own life [9, 14, 21].

The approach and examination of the ontogenetic course of the anxiety present that the anxiety is encountered even during the first year of life of the child, as soon as the types of anxiety manifestation get modified from one age to another. The babies experience the anxiety of strangers and the anxiety of separation. These types of anxiety persist at older children as well. Preschoolers manifest other types of anxiety, worries and preoccupations connected to animals, darkness, doctors, creatures and certain particular situations. Junior schoolchildren experience school fear and phobia. Such situations as: parents' divorce, separation of parents as well as various physical wounds and dangers determine the presence of anxiety in junior schoolchildren. The changes the preadolescents overcome also generate anxiety. Thus, the preadolescents feel the anxiety produced by the physical modifications, identity development, communication and

relations with parents, peers, colleagues, and the preadolescents of the opposite gender. Adolescents' anxiety is connected with appearance, development and constitution of the identity, school, future, relations with parents, with other adolescents and with the opposite gender [1, 9, 10, 17, 22].

The investigation of specialized literature emphasizes that the high levels of anxiety relate with a multidimensional etiology which include deficiencies at the level of interrelations existent within the family and with the features of personality components which are in development process during the childhood and adolescence [14, 17].

Chapter 2 entitled „**METHODOLOGY OF ANXIETY STUDY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**” comprises the presentation of the purpose, objectives, hypotheses and research target groups, as well as the detailed description of the tests and inventory administered to children and adolescents.

The research target group included **792 children** of different ages among which: **152 preschoolers** with ages between 4 and 7 years old, **170 junior schoolchildren** with ages between 7 and 11 years old, **320 preadolescents** with ages between 10 and 15 yearsold and **150 adolescents** with ages between 16 and 18 years old.

For the finding experiment we have launched the following general hypothesis: *The manifestation and levels of the anxiety in children and adolescents are determined by gender, age, development social conditions, influence personality features and are specific for different age stage.*

For the investigations derived from the purpose, objectives and hypothesis launched for the finding experiment we have chosen a series of tests, inventory and questionnaires for the more authentic examination and appreciation of anxiety and its correlates at children and adolescents: R. Temml, V. Amen and M. Dorca anxiety test for children, The unfinished sentences test (А. И. Захаров), Scale of anxiety manifestation at children, Ollendick phobias' scale for children, Taylor's scale of anxiety manifestation, Inventory of expression of anxiety as state and as trait, Phillips technique for school anxiety level diagnostic, Academic anxiety assessment questionnaire of Alpert – Harber, Family drawing test, the „Ladder” technique В. Шур, Дембо-Рубинштейн self-appreciation study of preadolescents technique (А. Прихожан variant), Self-confidence study test (В. Помек)) CPQ Questionnaire for children and Cattell 16PF Questionnaire Form C)

Chapter 3 „**ANXIETY STUDY IN PRESCHOOLERS**” grounds the anxiety in preschoolers through underlining the anxiety features (restlessness and concerns) in preschoolers

depending on gender and age, as well as, on psycho-social (family structure, family climate) and individual factors (self-appreciation) which determine anxiety at preschool stage.

In the intention to conceptualize anxiety in preschoolers through elucidating its specific character depending on gender and age we have administered the **R. Temml, V. Amen and M. Dorca anxiety test for children**. The results obtained for the anxiety levels at preschoolers are illustrated in figure 1.

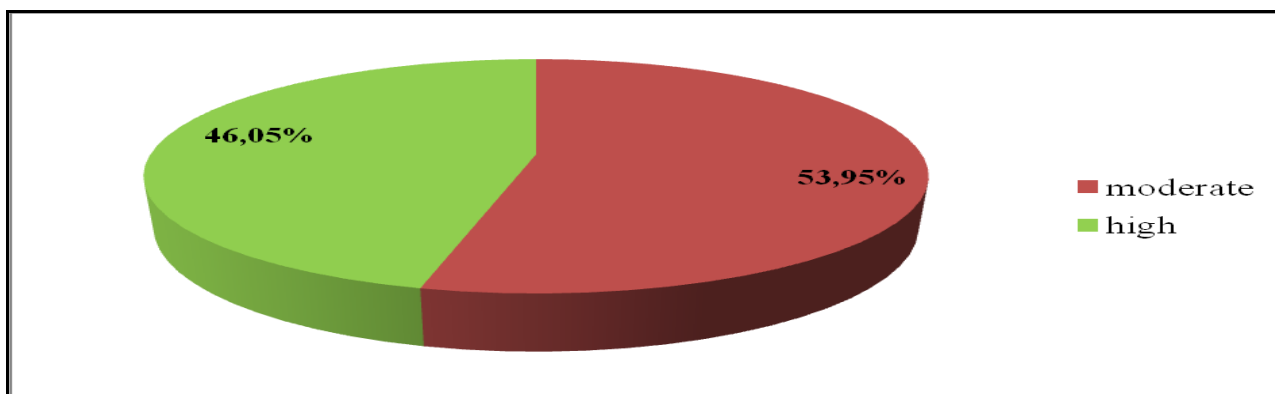


Fig. 1. Frequencies by anxiety levels in preschoolers

46,05% from the investigated preschoolers obtained high scores for anxiety, proving high anxiety level. We can affirm that the preschoolers with high anxiety level feel restlessness states, tension, frustration, permanent nervousness, manifest psychic fatigue, annoyance, hypersensitivity and distraction. Combined with defective management of their own feelings and emotions, we very often witness avoiding communication and socializing with other children. Boys and girls register high anxiety scores (53,85% and 37,83%). We would mention that there are no clear gender differences in anxiety manifestation at preschoolers. We would interpret this thing in such a way: both, boys and girls are predisposed to feel anxiety. Anxiety manifestation in preschoolers is characterized through distinct content and sphere. Boys present emphasized anxiety conditioned by their emotional vulnerability in the context of their relationship with parents and by everyday activities. Girls present emotional malfunctions in situations connected with the communication with the peers. The distinct feeling of emotional experiences together with the identification process and gender differentiation which continues at preschool stage ground the lack of gender differences in anxiety at this stage. Additionally, a possible reason for equal high anxiety level at boys and girls, proved by our observations, are changes concerning education and family composition of each preschooler, all of these combined with technological development affect the quality of the attachment and emotional and social development in preschoolers. The highest frequency for high anxiety level is noticed at 6 year-old and 4 year-old preschoolers (47,05%, $U=110$, $p \leq 0,01$ and 45,94%, $U=78$, $p \leq 0,01$), followed by 5 year-old

(41,81%) and 7 year–old preschoolers (66,67% – 6 preschoolers). The 4 year–old preschoolers and 6 year–old preschoolers feel the highest level of anxiety. The level of anxiety shows, on one hand, the fragility and labiality of the affective sphere and preschool personality development at the beginning of the age, as well as the growth of surrounding world complexity and the extension and intensification of the activities bigger preschoolers are involved in. We would explain preschoolers’ anxiety also as manifestation referring to some models and requirements which they do not manage to know, to understand and to accept.

We ground anxiety in preschoolers through the prism of its manifestation, namely the situational one being caused by new and changeable circumstances and events. The situational anxiety at preschool stage takes the shape of some distinct restlessness and concerns. The examination of restlessness and concerns at schoolchildren was realized through **The unfinished sentences test (A. И. Захаров)**. The anxieties, restlessness and concerns for the whole target group as well as the evolution of these, depending on gender and age are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Preschoolers’ anxieties, restlessness and concerns

| Anxiety, restlessness and fear | Frequency | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Total | Gender | | Age | | | |
| | | Boys | Girls | 4 years old | 5 years old | 6 years old | 7 years old |
| Fear of horror scenes from movies | 78,31 | 70,51 | 86,48 | 70,27 | 70,90 | 86,27 | 77,77 |
| Fear of darkness (fear of night) | 75,65 | 76,92 | 74,32 | 81,08 | 67,27 | 80,39 | 77,77 |
| Fear of remaining alone (fear of loneliness) | 46,71 | 42,30 | 51,35 | 35,13 | 43,63 | 60,78 | 33,33 |
| Fear of parents / parents’ punishment | 42,76 | 52,56 | 32,43 | 37,83 | 47,27 | 45,09 | 66,66 |
| Fear of animals | 38,81 | 37,17 | 40,54 | 35,13 | 45,45 | 39,21 | 11,11 |
| Fear of being scolded by parents (especially by mother) | 36,18 | 32,05 | 40,54 | 32,43 | 49,09 | 27,45 | 22,22 |
| Fear of beating, hitting and pinching | 34,21 | 34,61 | 33,78 | 29,72 | 34,54 | 37,25 | 33,33 |
| Fear and restlessness of arguments between parents | 26,97 | 21,79 | 32,43 | 18,91 | 16,36 | 41,17 | 44,44 |
| Fear of harsh sounds, noise, crying and shouting | 22,36 | 24,25 | 20,27 | 32,43 | 20 | 19,60 | 11,11 |
| Fear of nightmares and bad dreams | 9,21 | 10,25 | 8,10 | 5,40 | 12,72 | 8,80 | 0 |
| Fear of monsters | 8,55 | 5,12 | 12,16 | 13,51 | 5,45 | 7,84 | 11,11 |
| Fear of the bad, malice, bad people, bad children | 7,23 | 8,97 | 5,40 | 0 | 10,90 | 7,84 | 11,11 |
| Anxiety of separation (especially from the mother) | 6,57 | 7,69 | 5,40 | 2,70 | 9,09 | 7,84 | 0 |
| Fear of doctors, pain, injections, medicine | 6,57 | 7,69 | 5,40 | 5,40 | 7,06 | 5,88 | 11,11 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Fear of standing at corner | 5,92 | 6,41 | 5,40 | 18,91 | 3,53 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of kindergarten, of the educator | 5,92 | 8,97 | 2,70 | 8,01 | 5,45 | 3,92 | 11,11 |
| Restlessness and fear of not being played with | 3,28 | 2,56 | 4,05 | 0 | 3,53 | 1,96 | 22,22 |
| Fear of ghosts | 3,28 | 6,41 | 0 | 5,40 | 5,45 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of responding within kindergarten activities | 2,63 | 3,84 | 1,35 | 2,70 | 1,81 | 3,92 | 0 |
| Restlessness when parents are restless (especially mother) | 2,63 | 1,28 | 4,05 | 0 | 0 | 5,88 | 11,11 |
| Fear of tempests, snow, wind, fire | 2,63 | 3,84 | 1,35 | 0 | 3,53 | 1,96 | 11,11 |
| Fear of sadness | 1,97 | 2,56 | 1,35 | 0 | 0 | 5,88 | 0 |
| Fear of cold | 1,97 | 1,28 | 2,70 | 2,70 | 1,81 | 1,96 | 0 |
| Fear of height | 1,31 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,96 | 11,11 |
| Fear of tunnels | 1,31 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,92 | 0 |
| Fear of father's belt | 0,65 | 1,28 | 0 | 0 | 1,81 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of the excavator | 0,65 | 1,28 | 0 | 0 | 1,81 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of police | 0,65 | 1,28 | 0 | 0 | 1,81 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of robots | 0,65 | 1,28 | 0 | 2,70 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The preschool period is marked by certain anxieties, restlessness and specific concerns. Children between 4 and 7 years old face the following anxieties, restlessness and concerns: fear of horror scenes from movies (78,31%), fear of darkness (fear of night) (75,65%), fear of remaining alone (fear of loneliness) (46,71%), fear of parents / parents' punishment (42,46%), fear of animals (38,81%), fear of being scolded by parents (especially by mother) (36,18%) and fear of beatings, hitting and pinching (34,21%). Preschoolers boys and girls differ in what refers to manifested anxieties, restlessness and concerns. Prevalent at boys are the fear of darkness (fear of night) (76,92%), fear of parents / parents' punishment (52,56%, $\chi^2=6,2878$, $p\leq 0,05$), fear of beating, hitting and pinching (34,71%) and fear of harsh sounds, noise, crying and shouting (24,25%), while the girls feel the fear of horror scenes from movies (86,48%, $\chi^2=6,7394$, $p\leq 0,01$), fear of remaining alone (fear of loneliness) (51,35%), fear of animals, fear of being scolded by parents (especially by mother) (40,54%) and fear and restlessness of arguments between parents (32,43%). The distinct character of anxieties, restlessness and concerns at preschool stage is explained by the fact that boys and girls show behaviors full of intense feelings and emotional discharges, of exploration of adults' world reality differently. The anxieties, restlessness and concerns which children show correspond with their age. The 4 year-olds feel most intensely the fear of darkness (fear of night) (81,08%), fear of harsh sounds, noise, crying and shouting (32,43%), and fear of standing at corner (18,91%, $\chi^2=5,8336$, $p\leq 0,05$). The 5 year-olds are mostly afraid of being scolded by parents (especially by mother) (49,09%, $\chi^2=5,2246$, $p\leq 0,05$), fear of parents / parents' punishment (47,27%), fear of animals (45,45%)

and fear of nightmares and bad dreams (12,72%). The 6 year-old preschoolers frequently present the fear of horror scenes from movies (86,27%, $\chi^2=3,4241$, $p\leq 0,10$), fear of remaining alone (fear of loneliness) (60,78%, $\chi^2=5,628$, $p\leq 0,05$), fear and restlessness of arguments between parents (41,17%, $\chi^2=4,8967$, $p\leq 0,05$, $\chi^2=8,0289$, $p\leq 0,01$) and fear of beatings, hitting and pinching (37,25%). With the new changes, leaps and acquisitions in thinking, behaviors and personality of the preschooler we also identify modifications in children's anxieties, restlessness and concerns.

Preschoolers' anxiety was integratively approached through emphasizing psycho-social factors (family composition, family climate (favorable family situation, anxiety within the family, conflicts within the family, inferiority feeling and hostility in the family)), as well as individual ones (self-appreciation) which condition it. Initially we would present the anxiety levels at preschoolers from different types of families from the point of view of composition (complete family, temporarily disintegrated family and one-parent family).

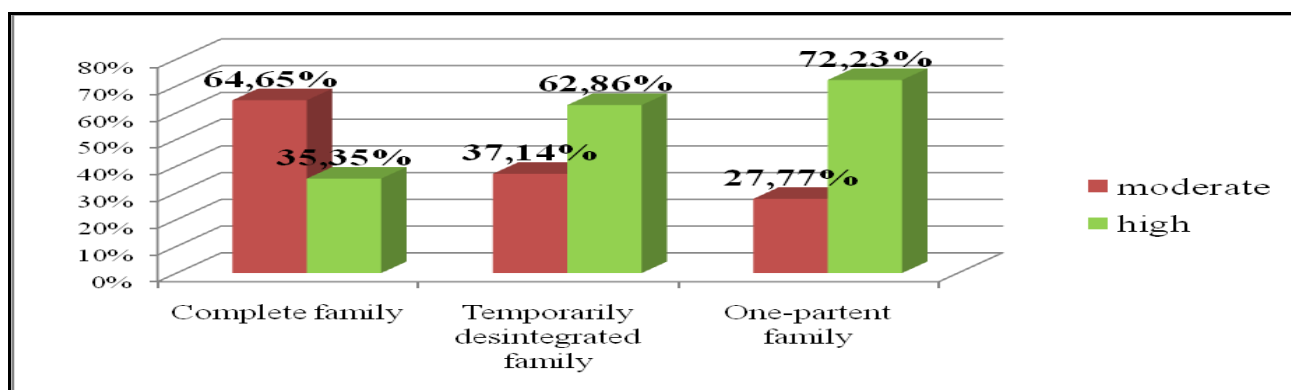


Fig. 2. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in preschoolers from different types of families

The preschoolers from temporarily disintegrated families (62,86%, $\chi^2=8,0024$, $p\leq 0,01$) and one-parent families (72,23%, $\chi^2=8,5569$, $p\leq 0,01$) prove a higher level of anxiety. The modifications in family composition so frequent and spectacular during the last years affect and change the way and practices of growing and educating children on several dimensions the preschoolers under investigation who come from temporarily disintegrated families and one-parent families face the risk to develop different problems, among which: communication difficulties, weak relations with other children, self-distrust, aggressiveness, vulnerability, restlessness and anxiety. The preschoolers feel stronger the separation from parents and prove higher anxiety compared to junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents included in the study. Even though, temporarily disintegrated families and one-parent families are determining factors of high anxiety at preschool stage, in complete families, there was identified a great

number of preschoolers with high anxiety, which allows us to affirm that the appearance of anxiety does not always depend on the structural composition of the family.

Next to the family structure, the most important influences exercised by the family environment discern from the home atmosphere. A factor that contributes to the atmosphere within the family consists in the extent to which it is loving and supporting or deep in conflicts. The interrelations between the anxiety and family climate features (**Family drawing test**) are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. Study of the correlation between anxiety and family climate according to Pearson

| Variables | Correlation coefficient | Significations threshold |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Anxiety / favorable family situation | $r=-0,5722$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / conflicts within the family | $r=0,4446$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |

Preschoolers' anxiety is conditioned by the family climate, spiritual atmosphere, interrelations established between adult family members (parent – parent), between adults and children (parents – children) and children – children, and the predominant way of communication. Not all the families can offer a balanced, warm and affective climate to the preschooler. The contemporary family is characterized by a conglomerate of problems and situations which are often detrimental to the fragile soul of the child and which can condition preschooler's anxiety. Moreover, the enumerated features of family climate, necessarily contribute to the appearance of anxieties, restlessness and concerns at preschoolers: the fear of parents / parents punishment, the fear of being scold by parents (especially by the mother), the fear of beatings, hitting and pinching, fear and restlessness of arguments between parents, restlessness when parents are restless (especially mother), the fear of standing at corner and the fear of father's belt.

The development of the anxiety in preschoolers can be explained through modifications in personality components, namely, self-esteem. A very high self-esteem prevails at the preschoolers with high level of anxiety (50%, **The „Ladder” technique B. Illyp.**). Very high self-esteem is influenced by low level of development of reflexing and permanent social comparison with other children. From the way of how the preschoolers describe themselves, one can conclude that they always have the tendencies to appreciate themselves in order to be like the rest of the children. The permanent relating to other children can potentiate the anxiety increase during the preschool period.

Chapter 4 **„ANXIETY STUDY IN JUNIOR SCHOOLCHILDREN”** conceptualize anxiety in junior schoolchildren by describing anxiety features (restlessness, concerns and fears)

depending on gender and age, the sources of anxiety in junior school period and the personality portrait of junior schoolchild with high level of anxiety.

The anxiety in junior schoolchildren was grounded through following and underlining its features depending on gender and age dimensions by the administration of the **Scale of anxiety manifestation at children**. The anxiety level at junior children are illustrated in figure 3.

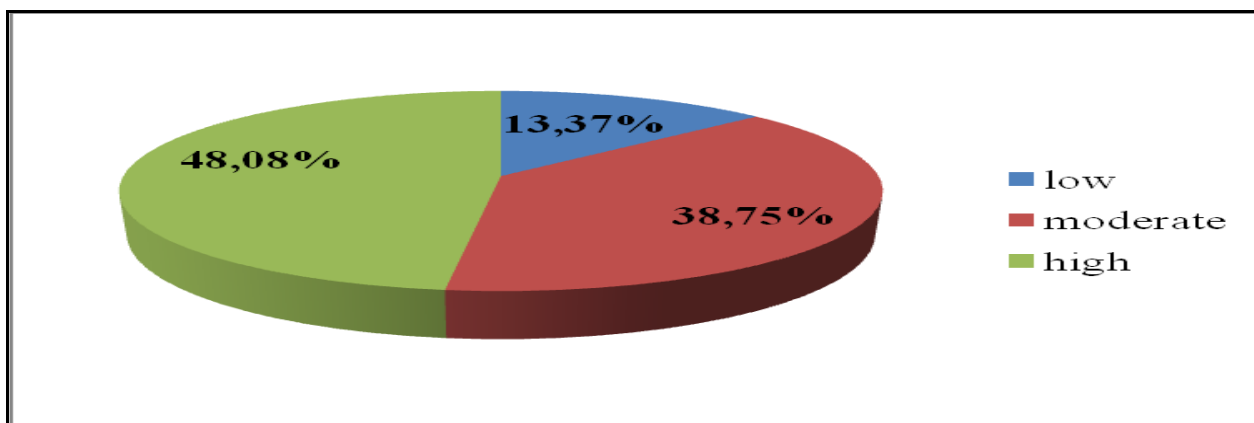


Fig. 3. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in junior schoolchildren

The junior schoolchildren studied extensively, reach high scores for anxiety which correspond to high level of anxiety (48,08%). Junior schoolchildren with high level of anxiety show such features such as: body tensions, emotions or stomachaches, headaches, they have difficulties while falling asleep, attention and concentration problems, feelings of loneliness, restlessness, adults' addiction, refusals to go to school, self-distrust. It becomes vivid that boys (47,04%) and girls (50%, $U=353$, $p \leq 0,05$) of junior school age show high level of anxiety. The girls are more predisposed to anxiety. Anxiety prevalence at girls can be explained by a certain influence of the nervous system, their higher susceptibility towards parent-child interaction (communication style, education), the psychological state of parents especially mother's (emotional problems, anxiety, depression) as well as by the difficulties and challenges at school and in relationships with peers. At the same time, boys have the tendency of denying that they feel anxiety and fear. This difference is emphasized and kept during the subsequent development periods, preadolescence and adolescence. 8 year-old juniors (49,02%, $U=77,5$, $p \leq 0,05$, $U=29,5$, $p \leq 0,05$) and 9 year-olds (58,34%, $U=134$, $p \leq 0,01$) present high anxiety compared to 10 year-olds (32,25%) and 11 year-olds (62,50% – 5 junior schoolchildren). Children at the beginning of junior school period are characterized by the incapacity to totally perceive and understand the experiences felt and which seem to be threatening, which lead to intensify and emphasize anxiety problems. We would mention as well the fact that small children still show inadequate social and coping abilities. As they get older, junior schoolchildren, by the development of thinking and

emotional self-regulation, can take into account more aspects of the situations and can react more rationally and more adequately to everyday circumstances. They already learn what cause anxiety and how adults react to emotions of such kind and learn how to behave as a consequence.

In order to complete the conception of anxiety in junior schoolchildren with new knowledge, we investigated the phobias typical to the age which come to outline the presence of the situational anxiety. The frequency for phobias (**Ollendick phobias' scale for children**) at junior schoolchildren are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Junior schoolchildren fears

| Fears | Frequencies | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Total | Boys | Girls | 9 year-old | 10 year-old | 11 year-old |
| Death or dead people | 75,64 | 76,92 | 74,35 | 76,35 | 73,52 | 62,50 |
| Fire, the phobia to be burnt | 66,66 | 66,66 | 66,66 | 66,66 | 61,76 | 62,50 |
| To be stricken by a car or lorry | 60,25 | 35,89 | 84,61 | 52,94 | 67,64 | 75 |
| To be contaminated with a severe disease | 55,12 | 58,97 | 51,28 | 43,58 | 58,82 | 62,50 |
| To fall from great height | 50 | 28,20 | 46,15 | 46,15 | 44,11 | 75 |
| To hear the parents arguing | 50 | 43,58 | 56,41 | 51,28 | 44,11 | 50 |
| To suffocate | 48,71 | 38,46 | 58,97 | 48,71 | 47,05 | 37,50 |
| A thief entering the house | 47,43 | 33,33 | 61,53 | 38,46 | 44,11 | 87,50 |
| To be cut or injured | 46,15 | 38,46 | 53,84 | 35,89 | 50 | 62,50 |
| To have low results at school | 43,58 | 43,58 | 43,58 | 33,33 | 44,11 | 75 |
| Nightmares | 39,74 | 33,33 | 46,15 | 48,71 | 26,47 | 37,50 |
| To be electrocuted | 39,74 | 35,89 | 43,58 | 41,02 | 32,35 | 50 |
| To get lost in an unknown place | 37,17 | 35,89 | 38,46 | 25,64 | 38,23 | 75 |
| Guns | 35,89 | 41,02 | 30,76 | 46,15 | 11,76 | 75 |
| Bears and wolves | 35,89 | 20,51 | 51,28 | 25,64 | 41,17 | 50 |
| Air attacks | 34,61 | 28,20 | 41,02 | 30,76 | 41,17 | 12,50 |
| Lizards and snakes | 32,30 | 17,94 | 66,66 | 35,29 | 47,05 | 62,50 |
| Spiders | 30,76 | 28,20 | 30,76 | 38,46 | 20,58 | 25 |
| Rats and mice | 29,48 | 10,25 | 51,28 | 30,76 | 26,47 | 25 |
| To have your hair cut | 28,20 | 10,25 | 46,15 | 20,51 | 38,23 | 12,50 |
| To be criticized by parents | 28,20 | 20,51 | 35,89 | 35,89 | 17,64 | 25 |
| To be punished | 26,92 | 20,51 | 33,33 | 41,02 | 8,82 | 25 |
| Unknown dogs or those with aggressive appearance | 26,92 | 23,07 | 30,76 | 10,25 | 44,11 | 25 |
| To be sent to the principal's office | 24,35 | 10,25 | 33,33 | 17,94 | 20,58 | 37,50 |
| To be obliged to wear someone else's clothes | 21,79 | 38,46 | 10,25 | 17,94 | 23,52 | 50 |
| Deep water and sea | 21,79 | 15,38 | 28,20 | 28,20 | 14,70 | 12,50 |
| To dance in front of an audience | 20,51 | 10,25 | 28,20 | 25,64 | 11,76 | 25 |
| To seem crazy | 19,23 | 20,51 | 17,94 | 15,38 | 20,58 | 25 |
| Cemeteries | 19,23 | 5,12 | 33,33 | 25,64 | 11,76 | 12,50 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bizarre people | 19,23 | 10,25 | 28,20 | 20,51 | 11,76 | 37,50 |
| Worms and snails | 17,94 | 2,56 | 33,33 | 17,94 | 17,64 | 12,50 |
| Bats and birds | 16,66 | 7,69 | 25,64 | 20,51 | 8,82 | 25 |
| To take an exam | 15,38 | 15,38 | 15,38 | 15,38 | 14,70 | 12,50 |
| To be car-sick | 14,10 | 7,69 | 20,51 | 10,25 | 14,70 | 25 |
| Not to pass an exam | 14,10 | 7,69 | 20,51 | 7,69 | 17,64 | 25 |
| To make mistakes | 14,10 | 10,25 | 17,94 | 12,82 | 14,70 | 12,50 |
| To be stung by a bee | 12,82 | 12,82 | 12,82 | 10,25 | 11,76 | 25 |
| To see blood | 12,82 | 2,56 | 23,07 | 15,38 | 8,82 | 12,50 |
| To be interrogated without being announced by the teacher | 12,82 | 20,51 | 5,12 | 15,38 | 5,88 | 25 |
| Sharp objects | 12,82 | 2,56 | 23,07 | 20,51 | 0 | 25 |
| To go to a doctor or to a dentist | 11,53 | 2,56 | 20,51 | 7,69 | 11,76 | 25 |
| Close spaces | 11,53 | 12,82 | 10,25 | 10,25 | 11,76 | 12,50 |
| Dark rooms | 11,53 | 7,69 | 15,38 | 10,25 | 11,76 | 12,50 |
| Injections | 10,25 | 5,12 | 15,38 | 10,25 | 5,88 | 25 |
| Buzzers noise | 8,97 | 7,69 | 10,25 | 10,25 | 2,94 | 25 |
| Ants and scarabs | 6,41 | 0 | 12,82 | 5,12 | 5,88 | 12,50 |
| To be kept at school | 6,41 | 5,12 | 7,69 | 7,69 | 5,88 | 0 |
| To be scolded / downcast | 5,12 | 7,69 | 2,56 | 7,69 | 2,94 | 0 |
| To be ill at school | 5,12 | 2,56 | 7,69 | 5,12 | 5,88 | 0 |
| To be in a crowd | 5,12 | 2,56 | 7,69 | 7,69 | 0 | 12,50 |
| To be involved in a bustle | 3,84 | 5,12 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 | 37,50 |
| To eat something that you do not like | 3,84 | 5,12 | 2,56 | 5,12 | 2,94 | 0 |
| To be obliged to go to school | 2,56 | 2,56 | 2,56 | 0 | 5,88 | 0 |
| Earthquake | 2,56 | 0 | 5,12 | 0 | 2,94 | 12,50 |
| To do something new | 1,28 | 0 | 2,56 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 |
| Tempests / storms | 1,28 | 0 | 2,56 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 |
| To go to hospital | 1,28 | 0 | 2,56 | 0 | 0 | 12,50 |
| Phantoms and ghosts | 1,28 | 0 | 2,56 | 0 | 2,94 | 0 |

As they get older, the children between 9 and 11 years old do not find themselves in anxieties, restlessness and concerns particular for preschoolers and junior schoolchildren of 7 and 8 years old. Only fears are kept: to hear the parents arguing (50%), of nightmares (39,74%), of animals (35,89%, 29,48%, 26,92%), to be punished (26,92%), to go to the doctor or to the dentist and of dark rooms (11,53%), of tempests / storms and of phantoms and ghosts (1,28%). The junior pupils develop fears about the greater world, beyond their immediate environment. At this age, children show fears of death or the dead (75,64%), fire, the phobia of being burnt (66,66%), to be stuck by a car or of a lorry (60,25%), to get contaminated with a severe disease (55,12%), to get suffocated (48,71%), to be cut or injured (46,15%), to be electrocuted (39,74%), to get lost in an unknown place (37,17%), etc. The essence of the phenomenon of anxiety in junior schoolchildren would be more exhaustive only by its approach and through the prism of new fears emphasized during this stage of development. The school framework and learning lead

to the appearance of new fears: low results at school (43,58%), being sent to the principal's office (24,35%), to take an exam (15,38%), not to pass an exam (14,10%), to be interrogated without being announced by the teacher (12,82%), to be kept at school (6,41%), to be obliged to go to school (2,56%). We would consider the listed concerns as component elements of SA. As they get older we ascertain the same legitimacy as with junior schoolchildren of 7 and 8 years old, the girls present more fears. Boys' fears can be conceptualized in connection with the threat of physical integrity and school situations. With all the above mentioned, girls' fears appear in relation to parents and / or can be caused by imagination and own thoughts without having a real ground. In the case of boys, the following fears can be outlined: the fear of death or the dead (76,92%), the fear of fire, or the phobia of being burnt (66,66%), the fear of being contaminated with a severe disease (58,97%) and the fear of having low results at school (43,58%), while among girls there are configured more fears, among which we can underline: the fear of being stricken by a car or lorry (84,61%, $\chi^2=19,326$, $p\leq 0,05$), the fear of fire or the phobia to be burnt and the fear of lizards and snakes (66,66%, $\chi^2=18,9616$, $p\leq 0,05$), the fear that a burglar is entering your house (61,53%, $\chi^2=6,2215$, $p\leq 0,05$), the fear of getting suffocated (58,97%), the fear of hearing your parents arguing / quarreling (56,41%), the fear of being cut or injured (53,84%), the fear of bears and wolves (51,28%, $\chi^2=8,0229$, $p\leq 0,05$) and the fear of spiders (30,76%, $\chi^2=15,4074$, $p\leq 0,01$).

The changes occurred in social development situation and in the fundamental activity of the junior schoolchildren determine the experimenting of new emotional states, among which SA. The underlined regularities and mechanisms for SA at junior schoolchildren, conceptualize anxiety at this stage of development. SA is vivid at junior school stage (23,08%, **Phillips technique for school anxiety level diagnostic**). Junior schoolchildren with SA often have the fear to be late, to be assessed or appreciated, to be beaten by mischievous children. They can be afraid of not disappointing or upsetting their teacher or parents. The fear of rejection or ridicule can become very intense feelings. Some junior schoolchildren with SA have a very well-developed feeling of responsibility and duty. They feel that they need to be perfect, to never make mistakes, not to upset the teacher, his parents and his peers. We consider that primary school pupils' SA can be explained by the modification of social development situation, switching to another type of activity (learning / study), psychological vulnerability of the child to life contexts and stressful events. Girls present SA in a more accentuated way compared to boys (25,64% and 20,51%, $U=333$, $p\leq 0,05$). We would explain this difference, most probably through differences of development, as well as through mental and social-moral growing-up. The girls

tend to care more, to be more timid, to have doubts of themselves and to be excessively preoccupied of to fulfill their teacher's and parents' expectations. They seek approval and need constant assurance and their concerns seem to be independent of their school performances and others opinions about them. SA is a problem the children often face, especially the 9 year-olds (27,78%, $U=5,5$, $p\leq 0,05$). The junior schoolchildren susceptibility can be conditioned by the family (an anxious, restless, depressive, stressed family member, overprotecting or indifferent education) or by the teacher (reproaches, ridicule of the child when he makes mistakes, the teacher enhances the hostility between the children or groups of children).

The growth of SA at junior schoolchildren has its origin in dynamic and integrative implications of the psycho-social factors (feeling social stress, the fear of not corresponding to other people's expectations and problems and fears in relations with the teachers) and individual factors (the frustration of the need to be successful, the fear of self-affirmation, the fear of self-affirmation, the fear of knowledge checking situations and low physiological resistance to stress). The frequencies for the levels of intensity of these factors at junior children are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Frequencies for the high level of school anxiety factors in junior school pupils depending on gender and age

| School anxiety factors | Frequency | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Total | Boys | Girls | 9 years-old | 10 years-old | 11 years-old |
| Feeling social stress | 17,95 | 17,95 | 17,95 | 19,44 | 14,70 | 25 |
| Te frustration of the need to be successful | 10,25 | 10,25 | 10,25 | 8,33 | 8,82 | 25 |
| The fear of self-affirmation | 35,89 | 38,46 | 33,33 | 33,34 | 29,42 | 75 |
| The fear of situations of knowledge checking | 43,60 | 35,89 | 51,28 | 55,56 | 29,42 | 50 |
| The fear of not corresponding to the expectations of the people around | 26,92 | 25,64 | 28,20 | 30,55 | 11,76 | 75 |
| The low physiological resistance to stress | 47,44 | 46,16 | 48,72 | 55,56 | 38,23 | 50 |
| Problems and fears in relations with the teachers | 23,07 | 23,08 | 23,08 | 33,34 | 11,76 | 25 |

A higher weight in explaining SA belongs to: physiological resistance to stress (47,44%), fear of situations of knowledge checking (43,60%) and the fear of self-affirmation (35,89%). A deeper analysis of SA points out that the intense scores of SA of the boys can be associated to low physiological resistance to stress (46,16%), fear of self-affirmation (38,46%) and fear of situations of knowledge checking (35,89%), while girls' SA is due to the influence of the same factors, but their hierarchy is distinct: fear of situations of knowledge checking (51,28%), physiological resistance to stress (48,72%) and the fear of not corresponding to the expectations

of people around (33,33%). The results of 9 year-old juniors show a dominance in SA of the fear of situations of knowledge checking and low physiological resistance to stress (55,56%), fear of self-affirmation, and problems and fears in the relations with the teacher (33,34%). The enumerated factors for 9 year-olds condition SA at 10 year-olds as well. The physiological resistance to stress (38,23%), the fear of self-affirmation and the fear of situations of knowledge checking (29,42%) are referential in explaining SA. The fear of self-affirmation and the fear of not corresponding to the expectations of the people around (75%), fear of situations of knowledge checking and physiological resistance to stress (50%) explain the development of SA at 11 year-old junior schoolchildren.

Holistic approach to anxiety in junior schoolchildren was centered on the identification of defining factors of this. Initially we investigated the psycho-social factors (family structure and features of family climate) which favour the presence of anxiety. The anxiety level at junior schoolchildren from complete families, from temporarily disintegrated families and from one-parent families are illustrated as follows.

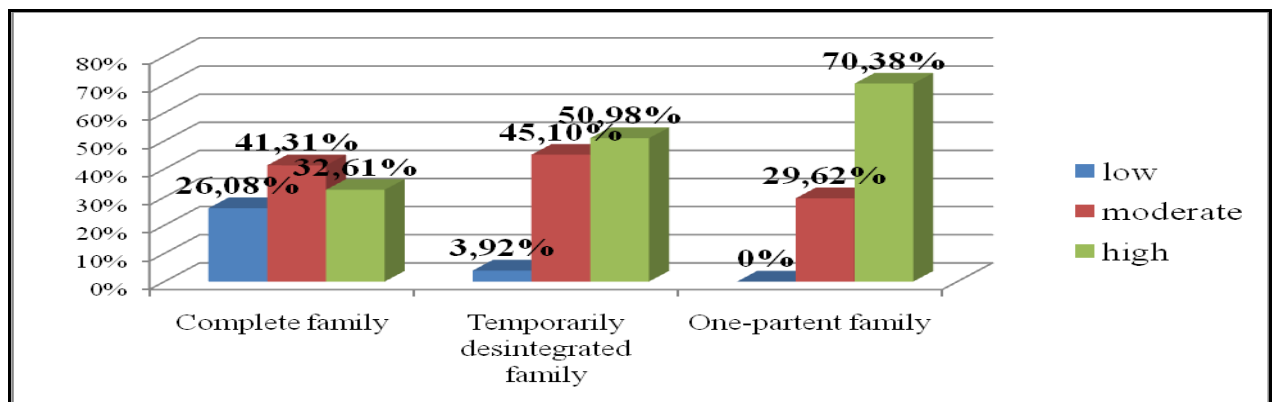


Fig. 4. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in junior schoolchildren from different types of families

Junior schoolchildren from one-parent families (70,38%, $\chi^2=9,3692$, $p \leq 0,01$ și $\chi^2=2,7193$, $p \leq 0,10$) have higher anxiety compared to junior schoolchildren from temporarily disintegrated families (50,98%) and to those from complete families (32,61%). For junior schoolchildren we emphasize upon the same tendency as for preschoolers: the temporarily disintegrated family as well as one-parent family triggers the development of anxiety in junior schoolchildren.

Besides the family structure, for junior schoolchildren, we investigated the features of family climate as well. The associations between anxiety and family climate features (**Family drawing test**) are emphasized in table 5.

Table 5. The study of correlation between anxiety and family climate features according to Pearson

| Variables | Correlations coefficient | Significances threshold |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Anxiety / favorable family situation | $r=-0,676$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / anxiety within the family | $r=0,4921$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / conflicts within the family | $r=0,6466$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / sense of inferiority | $r=0,5607$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / hostility within the family | $r=0,6618$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |

Junior schoolchildren anxiety is determined by the family climate, the atmosphere and the interrelations between parents, between parents and children, between children and by the existent communication style. A factor that contributes to the harmonious development of the child is the family atmosphere full of warmth, encouragement, sensibility, and affection towards the child. Many junior schoolchildren live within families with a climate impregnated with hostility, opposition, insecurity, rejection, lack of implication and conflicts, which can condition the risk of developing behavioral problems as well as internalizing anxiety, fear, upset, aggression and low self-esteem. The unfavorable features of the family climate create conditions for the development at junior schoolchildren of: fear of punishment, fear of beating, fear of being scold by parents, fear of hearing the parents arguing / quarrelling and fear of being criticized by parents.

The development of the anxiety in junior schoolchildren is conditioned by the self-esteem as a fundamental component of the personality. For 7 year-old juniors the same interrelation between anxiety and self-esteem is kept as at preschool stage. 7 year-old schoolchildren with high level of anxiety present very high level of self-esteem (29,34%, $r=0,3426$, $p\leq 0,01$, **The „Ladder” technique B. Илѣп**). As a whole, junior schoolchildren have more conscientious, more realistic and more balanced judgments and self-appreciations. Juniors' self-appreciation / self-esteem is based on school results and on daily confrontations and comparisons with peers. The very high self-appreciation of the investigated children can be explained by the lack of the assessment and grading of the learning activity with grades in the primary school, and its realization through the attribution of ratings. Therefore, not all the juniors are conscious of their own value in comparison to their peers which can condition feelings of inferiority, restlessness and anxiety.

The integrated approach to anxiety is possible through the prism of the study of modifications in personality traits. In order to study and outline the evidence of personality traits at junior schoolchildren we administered the **CPQ Questionnaire for children**. The averages

for personality traits at junior schoolchildren with different anxiety levels are illustrated in figure 5.

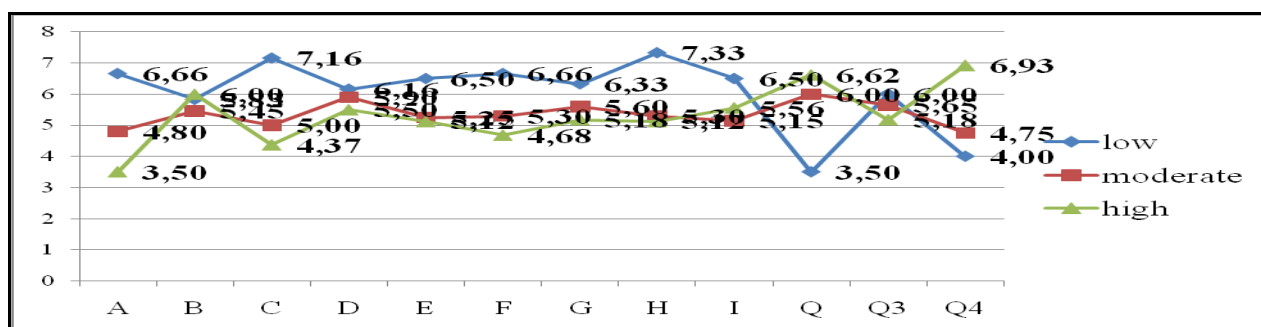


Fig. 5. Averages for personality traits in junior schoolchildren with different anxiety levels

The presence of the anxiety in junior schoolchildren is associated with personality factors: the A factor: *schizothymia* – *cyclothymia* ($r=-0,5024$, $p\leq 0,01$), C factor: *emotional instability* – *stability* ($r=-0,3934$, $p\leq 0,01$), F factor: *expansivity* – *nonexpansivity* ($r=-0,4856$, $p\leq 0,01$), H factor: *timidity* – *boldness* ($r=-0,5606$), Q factor: *confidence* – *tendency for culpability* ($r=0,4845$, $p\leq 0,01$) and Q4 factor: *weak ergic tension* and *high ergic tension* ($r=0,6797$, $p\leq 0,01$).

Chapter 5 „**ANXIETY STUDY IN PREADOLESCENTS**” elucidates the integrative approach of anxiety in preadolescents. The following aspects are described as follows: anxiety manifestation (anxiety-state, anxiety-trait) at preadolescents of different gender and age, the features of school anxiety at boys-preadolescents and girls-preadolescents of different ages, factors that condition anxiety in preadolescence and personality traits at preadolescents with high level of anxiety.

The grounding of anxiety in preadolescents started from the investigation of gender and age features in manifesting this through the **Scale of anxiety manifestation in children** and **Taylor’s scale of anxiety manifestation**. The anxiety levels of anxiety in preadolescents are illustrated in figure 6.

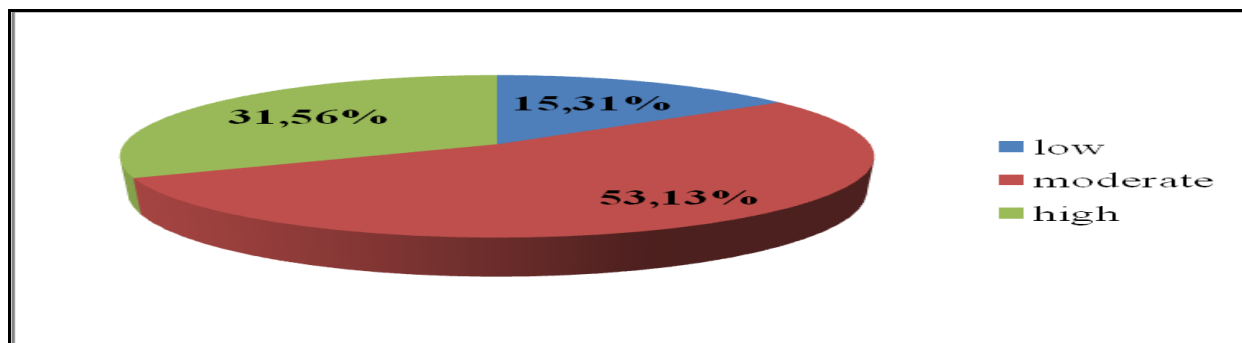


Fig. 6. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in preadolescents

The data show again a high incidence of anxiety in preadolescence (31,56%). Anxiety in preadolescents causes: strong heartbeats, superficial breathing, shivering and sweating/perspiration, pessimistic beliefs and concerns, an emotional state of alarm, fear, the tendency to perceive the world as threatening, timidity, indecision and attempts to control the environment he is in. The gender differences established at junior school stage are kept in preadolescence as well (boys: 29,14% and girls: 33,72%, $T=2,9$, $p \leq 0,01$). The findings for differences between preadolescent girls and preadolescent boys connected to anxiety, which we referred to concerning junior school age, can be considered for the explanation of the results which were obtained for the preadolescents. We need to add to these explanations the accentuated psychological tension of the preadolescents connected to the biological changes of the puberty. Other possible factors can be the way the girls socialize and greater vulnerability of these to the stress within social relations. 12 year-old (31,15%, $U=29,5$, $p \leq 0,01$), 13 year-old (30,44%, $U=13$, $p \leq 0,01$), 14 year-old (32,86%, $U=8,5$, $p \leq 0,01$) and 15 year old preadolescents (32,76%, $U=12$, $p \leq 0,01$) present higher anxiety compared to those of 10 year-old (33,33%) and 11 year-old (29,51%). At the age of 12, the anxiety is generated by the novelty of growth and of physical changes and the modification of the preadolescent's role in the family, school and community. The anxiety of 13 year-old preadolescents is conditioned by the manifestation of the puberty crisis. The intense development of self-awareness, the growth of aspirations for freedom, for autonomy get to a series of not always positive feelings as: anger, negativity, aggressiveness and anxiety. The period of preadolescence which comprises the ages of 14 and 15 years-old is a step of transition, stressing and tumultuous to adolescence, which includes a series of specific features, a collection of biological, psychical and social modifications. The above mentioned changes emphasize the concern, tension, worries, agitation and anxiety.

The new way of anxiety manifestation, besides AS, starting with adolescence, is AT. AT is an element of the personality which prefigures the permanent way of responding with anxiety to external phenomena, but also to internal ones. The fact that we already encounter high level of AT at 41,57% (**Inventory of expression of anxiety as state and as trait**) of preadolescents is very worrying. AT is a personality characteristic of the preadolescents who feel AS at a more intense level, for longer durations and within a wider area of circumstances. The preadolescent girls present higher AT (48,53%, $T=5,9$, $p \leq 0,01$). The predominance of AT at girls is conditioned by the great number of situational anxieties characteristic to girls at preliminary stages of development. We would record here the delicacy of preadolescent girls in front of psycho-social and individual dimensions which cause anxiety. Emphasized AT prevails at 11

year-old (44,27%, $U=45$, $p\leq 0,05$), 12 year-old (47,55%, $U=27$, $p\leq 0,01$), 13 year-old (43,48%, $U=30$, $p\leq 0,01$) and 15 year-old preadolescents (43,11%). The defining framework of AT accentuated at older preadolescents include the implications of gender and age features and changes.

We conceptualize the anxiety in preadolescents by investigating the psycho-social and individual factors which contribute to its development. As it follows we would highlight the levels of anxiety in preadolescents from complete, temporarily disintegrated families and from one-parent families.

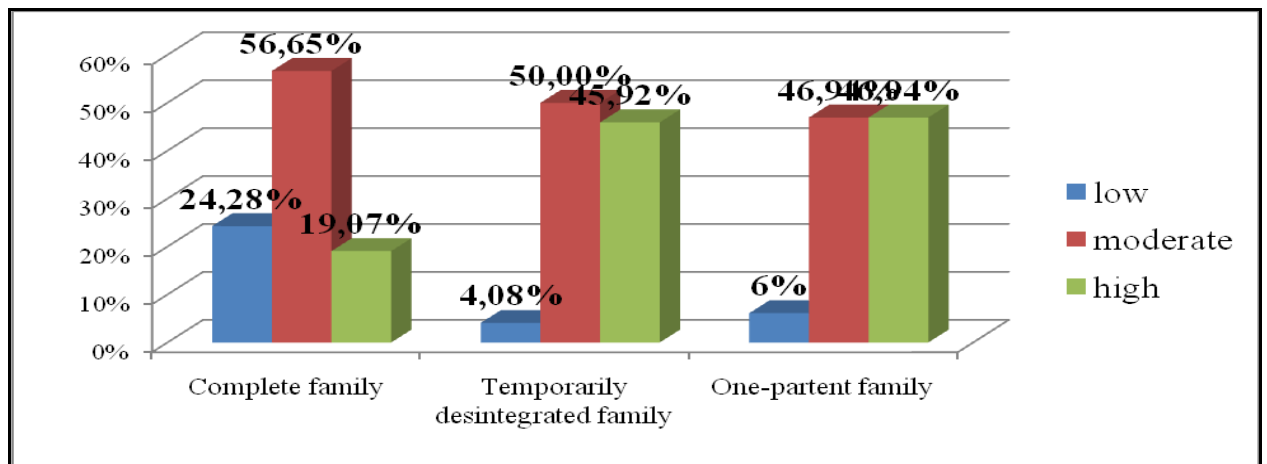


Fig. 7. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in preadolescents from different types of families

The preadolescents from temporarily disintegrated families (45,92%, $\chi^2=22,5756$, $p\leq 0,01$) and preadolescents from one-parent families (46,94%, $\chi^2=15,7172$, $p\leq 0,01$) are more anxious than the preadolescents from complete families. As we found out with regard to preschool stage and junior school stage, the temporarily disintegrated family and the one-parent family have important influences on the development of the anxiety in preadolescents.

The study of the family included the identification of family climate features which can influence the presence of the anxiety in preadolescents. The implications and the nature of the interaction between the family climate features (**Family drawing test**) and anxiety are illustrated in table 6.

Table 6. Study of the correlation between anxiety and family climate features according to Pearson

| Variables | Correlations coefficient | Significances threshold |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Anxiety / favorable family situation | $r=-0,3829$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / anxiety within family | $r=0,4928$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / conflicts within the family | $r=0,3865$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / sense of inferiority | $r=0,6025$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / hostility in the family | $r=0,4865$ | $p\leq 0,01$ |

As well as smaller children, the preadolescents are sensitive to the psychological atmosphere from the family. A social situation of unfavorable and disadvantaged development impregnated with lack of love, with antipathy, hostility, objection, reciprocal spouses' distrust, with affective and spiritual relations marked by negative emotions, with instability, by an atmosphere of fear, with tension, worry, strain, insecurity and stress determine the establishment of anxiety in preadolescence.

Besides the family context, in preadolescence, other sources of anxiety are related with the changes in the content of self-awareness (low self-appreciation – 40%, $r=0,3038$, $p\leq 0,01$, **Дембо-Рубинштейн self-appreciation study of preadolescents technique (А. Прихожан variant)**, low self-confidence – 50%, $r=-0,3241$, $p\leq 0,01$, **Self-confidence study test (B. Ромек))** and communication experience of the preadolescence with peers and with the reference group (low social contacts initiation, 58,93%, $r=-0,4385$, $p\leq 0,01$). The production of profound changes in terms of the development of central elements – shapes the psychological portrait of the preadolescent. The perception and evaluation of own capacities, aptitudes, physical and character traits, emotions, feelings, thoughts and judgments allow the initiation of self-image formation. In preadolescence, the self-appreciation and self-confidence lack precision are fragmentary, unstable, and very often negative. Such features of self-appreciation and self-confidence have an impact upon the emotional state of the preadolescent generating dissatisfaction, aggressiveness, fears and anxiety. Preadolescent's rejection and disapproval, distant, reserved and unfriendly interrelation with the peers, the limitation or lack of communication within the group of students lead to closure, retreat and loneliness of the preadolescent. Preadolescent's isolation perpetuates the feelings of sensitivity, unrest, susceptibility, distrust, insecurity, vivid anxiety.

The anxiety interrelations with personality traits complete the explicative laws and mechanisms of the anxiety in adolescents. The results obtained for personality traits (**Cattel 16PF Questionnaire Form C**) at preadolescents with different anxiety levels are presented in figure 8.

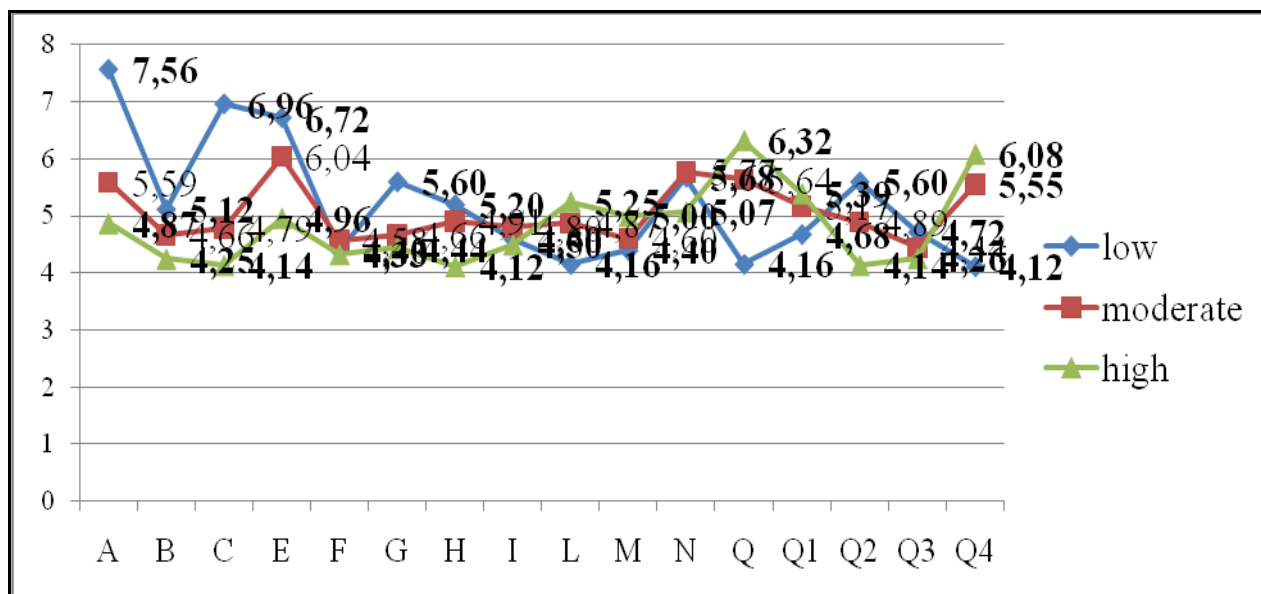


Fig. 8. Averages for personality traits at preadolescents with different anxiety levels

The personality traits characteristic to preadolescents with high anxiety are: A factor: *schizothymia* – *cyclothymia* ($r=-0,597$, $p\leq 0,01$), C factor: *emotional instability* – *emotional stability* ($r=-0,6416$, $p\leq 0,01$), E factor: *obedience* – *dominance* ($r=-0,6652$, $p\leq 0,01$), G factor: *low superego* – *superego force* ($r=-0,3927$, $p\leq 0,01$), H factor: *timidity* – *boldness* ($r=-0,4706$, $p\leq 0,01$), L factor: *trustful attitude* – *doubt* ($r=0,4216$, $p\leq 0,01$), Q factor: *trust* – *tendency to culpability* ($r=0,5628$, $p\leq 0,01$), Q2 factor: *addictive attitude* – *independence towards the group* ($r=-0,4722$, $p\leq 0,01$), and Q4 factor: *weak ergic tension* and *strong ergic tension* ($r=0,3763$, $p\leq 0,01$).

Chapter 6 „**ANXIETY STUDY IN ADOLESENTS**” describes the development of anxiety in adolescents and includes the emphasis of the following aspects: the specifics of the anxiety (anxiety – state, anxiety – trait) at adolescent boys and girls of different ages, features of academic anxiety in adolescents depending on gender and age, the sources that shape anxiety in adolescents and personality traits typical for adolescents with high anxiety level.

Adolescents’ anxiety was conceptualized starting with the study of its features conditioned by gender and age dimensions by the administration of **Taylor anxiety manifestation scale**. The levels of anxiety in adolescents are illustrated in figure 9.

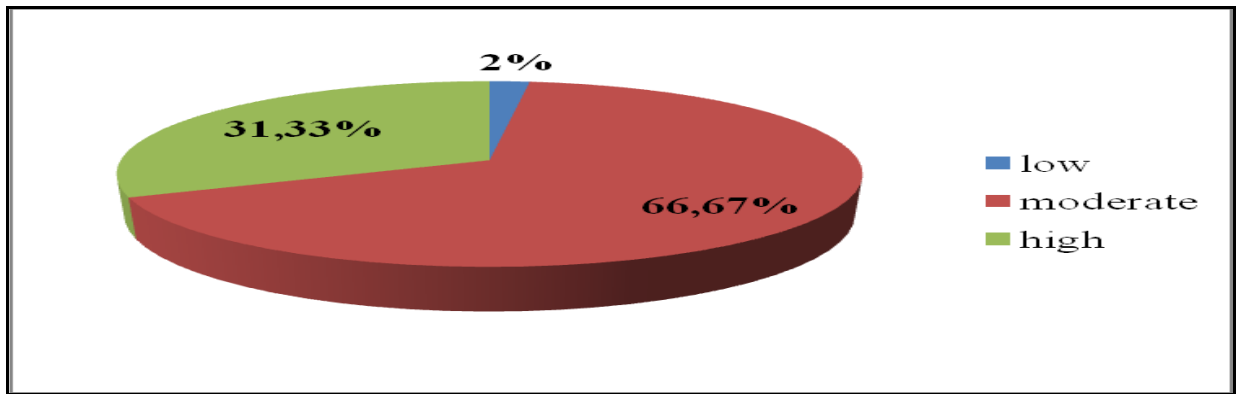


Fig. 9. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in adolescents

The adolescents present a high level of anxiety (31,33%). The anxious adolescents show: headaches and stomachaches, accelerated pulse, rapid breathing, cold hands, repetitive thoughts, scary mental images, worries, restlessness, nervousness and avoidance. Gender differences regarding anxiety are kept in adolescence as well (adolescent boys: 23,88% and adolescent girls: 37,34%, $T=3,1$, $p \leq 0,01$). Girls' anxiety derives from the explanations mentioned for juniors and preadolescent girls. Adolescence challenges can as well determine anxiety. Body changes, sexuality, personal identity development, real life problems: love, relations with the opposite gender, conflicts with parents, choices connected to the future become overwhelming for the adolescents and can cause stress, confusion, tensions, worries and anxiety. 17 year-old (39,58%) and 18 year-old adolescents (32,31%, $U=41$, $p \leq 0,05$) show higher anxiety compared to those of 16 years-old. The intensification and emphasis of future importance (personal, professional and social) as well as study for high school examinations and possibly those for the application to the university can increase adolescents' anxiety.

As well as in preadolescence, we ground the anxiety in adolescents through the prism of the evidences and examination of AT (30,66%). The adolescents with AT present a series of difficulties at emotional, psycho-social levels and performances reduction. AT prevails at adolescent girls (42,17%, $U=117$, $p \leq 0,05$). They show accentuated vulnerability to physical and psycho-social modifications. Plus, we would mention that the adolescence in itself with its features and challenge can cause stress, pressions, restlessness and confusions which would steady AT as stable personality element. 17 year-old (33,33%, $U=12$, $p \leq 0,05$) and 18 year-old adolescents (37,50%) show higher level of AT. AT gets stable and durable personality system at the end of adolescence, which shapes the way of expression of the personality.

Anxiety development in adolescents is associated with the following influence factors (psycho-social and individual). The three intensity levels of anxiety for the adolescents from different types of the families depending on composition are illustrated in figure 10.

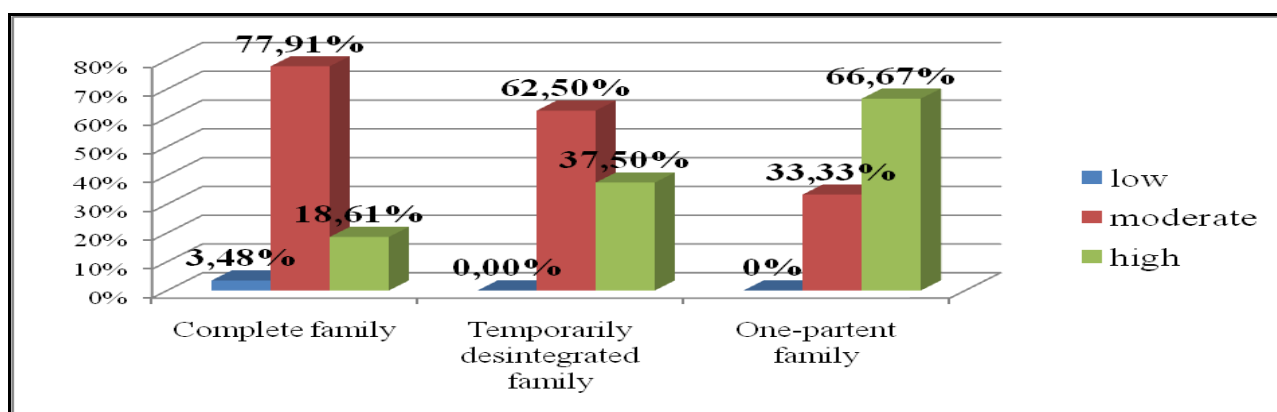


Fig. 10. Frequencies by levels for anxiety in adolescents from different types of families

High anxiety manifested in adolescence is conditioned by the type of the family from which the adolescent comes: the temporarily disintegrated family (37,50%, $\chi^2=5,2548$, $p \leq 0,05$) and one-parent family (66,67%, $\chi^2=21,0117$, $p \leq 0,05$). As well as in previous development stages we would mention that the temporarily disintegrated family and one-parent family have implications in the establishment of the anxiety in adolescence.

The explanatory framework of the anxiety in adolescents is reflected in the emphasis of the interrelations between anxiety and family climate features (**Family drawing test**).

Table 7. Study of the correlation between the anxiety and family climate features according to Pearson

| Variables | Correlations coefficient | Significances threshold |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Anxiety / favorable family situation | $r=-0,5242$ | $p \leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / anxiety within the family | $r=0,4697$ | $p \leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / conflicts within the family | $r=0,6581$ | $p \leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / sense of inferiority | $r=0,3118$ | $p \leq 0,01$ |
| Anxiety / hostility in the family | $r=0,6718$ | $p \leq 0,01$ |

The central element in anxiety problems in adolescents is each separate family climate as concrete development situation. The adolescents that come from a family where the climate is full of lack of affectivity, emotional instability, anxiety, depression, negativity, lack of support, unpredictability, humiliation, criticism, threatening, hostility will show anxiety.

The multy-aspect approach to anxiety determination in adolescence included as well the investigation of individual factors referring to key-components of adolescents' personality which continue to crystallize and define at this age stage. Adolescence anxiety is connected self-confidence (low level: 31,91%, $r=-0,3922$, **The self confidence study test (B. Pomer)**) and social courage (low level: 65,96%). The self-confidence in adolescents is strongly influenced by the body image, as well as, by the development and definition of own identity. The discontent with body image and the failure in acquiring a steady, comfortable and durable identity have as a

result the diffusion of the role or a sense of confusion concerning what and who the adolescent is, which is also reflected in self-doubt. All these can cause disorientation, despair and strong anxiety. The circumstances connected with the delineation of adolescents' identity can undermine their courage and consequently determine the presence of anxiety.

An important direction in our approach of anxiety grounding was the investigation of association between anxiety and personality traits of the adolescents. Adolescents' personality traits were investigated through the administration of **Cattel 16PF Questionnaire (Form C)**. The obtained results are presented in figure 11.

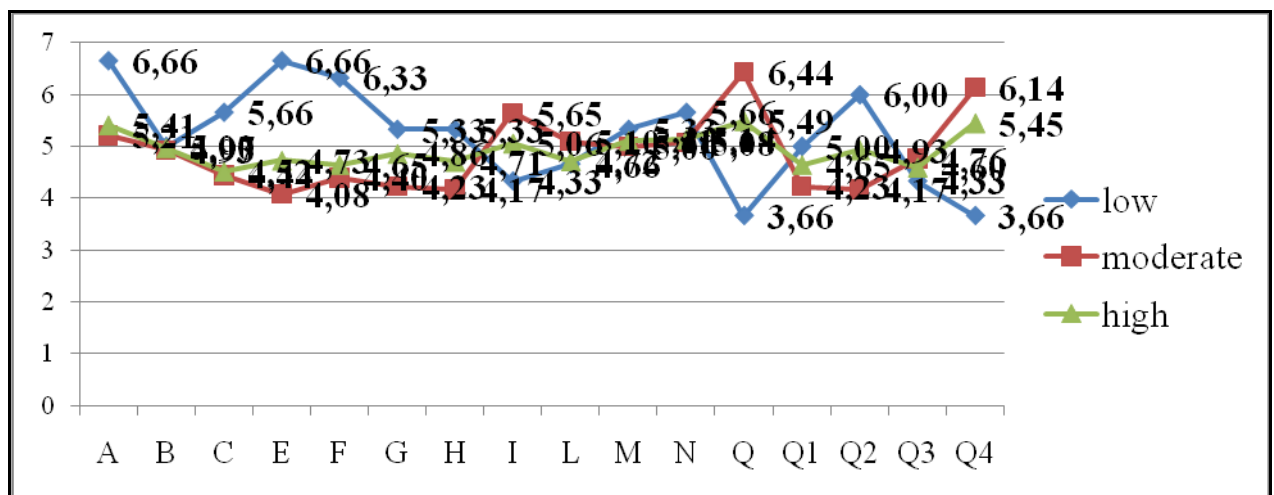


Fig. 11. Averages for personality traits in adolescents with different levels of anxiety

Adolescents' high anxiety is interrelated with the following personality factors: E factor: *obedience* – dominance ($r=-0,5188$, $p\leq 0,01$), G factor: *weak superego* – superego force ($r=-0,333$), H factor: *timidity* – boldness ($r=-0,3648$, $p\leq 0,01$), I factor: *rationality* – *affection* ($r=0,3817$, $p\leq 0,01$), Q factor: *trust* – *tendency for culpability* ($r=0,4599$, $p\leq 0,01$), Q2 factor: *addiction attitude* – independence towards the group ($r=-0,4731$, $p\leq 0,01$) and Q4 factor: *weak ergic tension* and *high ergic tension* ($r=0,4756$, $p\leq 0,01$).

Anxiety grounding and conceptualization allowed us to elaborate a new complex model of the psychological portrait of the anxious child and adolescent.

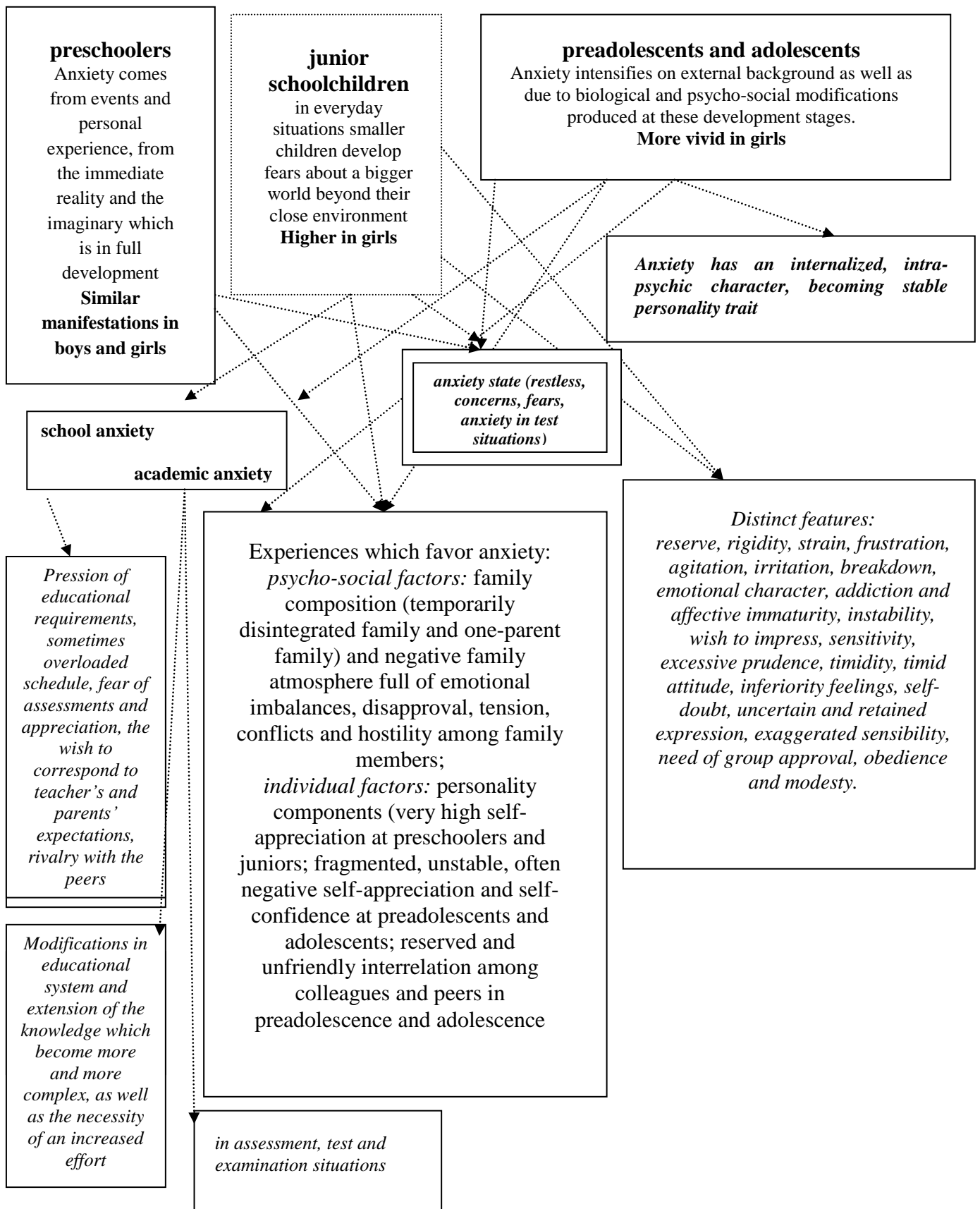


Fig. 12. Psychological portrait of the anxious child and adolescent

In chapter 7 „**STUDY OF ANXIETY REDUCTION IN PRESCHOOLERS**” we refer to the general features of the formative experiment: we describe the objectives, the psychological intervention program principles, the psychological influence techniques, procedures and methods, the methodological structure of the developmental approach, group activities stages; here we also present the efficiency of the elaborated and implemented program by comparing and emphasizing the obtained differences between the children from the test experimental group and children from the retest experimental group, the children from the test control group and retest control group, the children from retest experimental group and the children from the retest control group.

For the formative experiment we launch the following hypothesis: *we presuppose that the psychological interventions specially organized in educational environment can positively influence the development of preschooler’s affectivity favoring the development of positive emotional skills, of key elements of self-awareness, the development of independent, active, confident and courageous behavior, the elimination of inhibitions thus contributing to the reduction of the anxiety.*

Starting from the nature, features and individual factors involved in the appearance of preschoolers anxiety, worries and fears, we determined the following objectives for the formative experiment: 1. the development of self-appreciation and of self-confidence, through creation of a favorable climate of communication and interaction; overcoming blockages and inhibitions through the development and optimization of emotional skills and of independent, active, bold and courageous behavior, of a happy, positive and optimistic attitude; development of verbal and non-verbal communication, acquisition and development of social relating and integration and the development of creativity and spontaneity; 2. the removal of psychomuscular and emotional strain and tension through exercising and practicing relaxation and meditation techniques.

The fundamental principles, which the psychological intervention program was based on, are: *the principle of correction and diagnosis unity, the principle of using a set of psychological research methods, the principle of considering the child as a whole and as individuality, the principle of game valorization, the principle of diversity of contexts of anxiety reduction and kind/considering, encouraging, stimulating attitude and appreciation for the child* [2, 3, 8, 17, 25].

Within the implemented psychological intervention activities, we practiced a great variety of communication styles, of work techniques, procedures and ways elaborated according to basic

psychological orientations among which, we can mention: 1. *Expressive-creative techniques* and 2. *Relaxation, meditation exercises and other mindfulness type practices* [2, 4, 6, 7, 13, 14, 17, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32].

The formative experiment included 24 preschoolers: 12 in the experimental group and 12 in the control group. The psychological interventions were realized twice a week, during three months, so that the total number constituted 24 activities. The duration of an activity as between 40 and 60 minutes.

The investigation of psychological intervention program for anxiety reduction effectiveness was realized within the following directions: comparison and emphasizing the differences obtained by the preschoolers from test EG and retest EG; by the preschoolers from test CG and retest CG and by the preschoolers from retest EG and retest CG.

Initially we would present the results for preschoolers from test EG and retest EG, retest CG and retest EG, and test CG and retest CG for **R. Temml, V. Amen and M. Dorca anxiety test for children.**

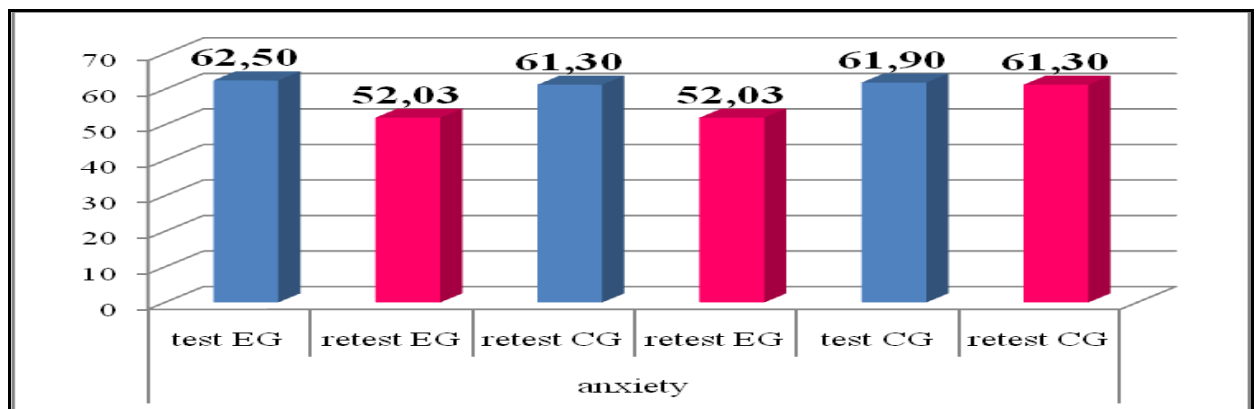


Fig. 13. Averages for preschoolers' anxiety from test EG and retest EG/test CG and retest CG and retest EG and retest CG

The graphic presentation of the experimental results illustrates differences between the averages of the preschoolers from test EG and retest EG. For the preschoolers from test EG is characteristic the average of 62,50 (u.m.), while for the preschoolers from retest EG it is 52,03 (u.m.). According to Wilcoxon test we record statistically significant difference between the results of the preschoolers from test EG and those from retest EG ($W=3$, $p \leq 0,01$) with lower results for the preschoolers from retest EG. We also remark substantial changes for the anxiety of preschoolers from retest EG and retest CG. The lower average is encountered at schoolchildren from retest EG (52,03 u.m.), a higher average is specific for the preschoolers from retest CG (61,30 u.m.). Statistically, according to U Mann-Whitney test, we identify the

significant differences between the results of preschoolers from retest EG and retest CG ($U=39$, $p\leq 0,05$) with lower results for the preschoolers from retest EG. The preschoolers from retest EG become quieter, calmer and more tempered. In daily situations, as well as in difficult and new ones, they show more self-confidence and try to control their emotions, worry and uncertainty by transforming negative feelings in positive emotional states. The changes occurred are due to the techniques of development of independent, active, bold and courageous behavior models, as well as to those of removing psycho-emotional strain. Even though significant progress are recorded, these are not constant reactions and sometimes have situational character. The compared analysis of the results allows us to mention that the averages of the preschoolers from test CG and retest CG are very close (61,90 u.m. și 61,30 u.m.). Statistically, according to Wilcoxon test there are not substantial differences between the results from test CG and retest CG.

The anxiety averages according to **Unfinished sentences test (A. И. Захаров)** for the preschoolers from test EG and from retest EG, retest CG and retest EG, and from test CG and retest CG are presented in figure 14.

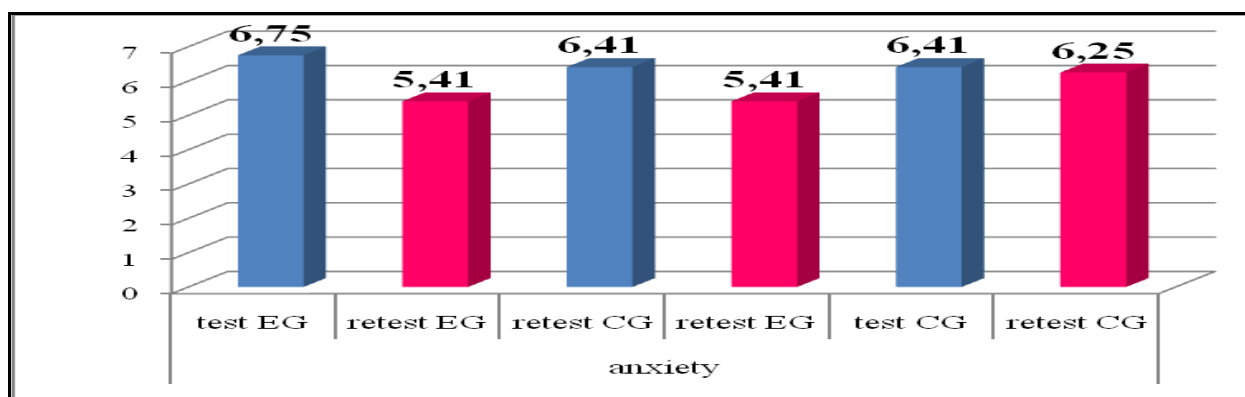


Fig. 14. Averages for preschoolers' anxiety from test EG and retest EG/ test CG and retest CG/ retest EG and retest CG

The comparison of the results allows us to ascertain medium differences: the preschoolers from test EG – 6,75 (u.m.) and the preschoolers from retest EG – 5,41 (u.m.). Statistically, according to the Wilcoxon test we get significant differences between the results of the preschoolers from test EG and retest EG ($W=7$, $p\leq 0,01$) with lower results for retest EG preschoolers. The comparison of the average values for the preschoolers from retest EG and from retest CG for the anxiety, show that the average of the preschoolers from retest EG decreases (5,41 u.m.) compared with the average of the preschoolers from retest CG (6,41 u.m.). According to U Mann-Whitney test we notice statistically significant differences between the results of the preschoolers from retest EG and retest CG ($U=41,5$, $p\leq 0,05$) with lower results for the preschoolers from retest EG. We would remark that the psychological intervention program

has a positive impact and produces modifications at anxiety level at preschoolers through feeling positive affective states, the feeling of unity with other members of the group, satisfying the need of communication with the peers and stimulation of self-confidence. The compared analysis of the results allow to mention that the averages of the preschoolers from test CG and of those from retest CG are close (61,90 u.m. și 61,30 u.m.). Statistically, according to Wilcoxon test, there are no vivid differences between the results of the preschoolers from test CG and retest CG.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigational approach targets the theoretical and experimental substantiation of the anxiety phenomenon at different age stages in the context of new social realities, as well as the configuration of a psychological interventions model oriented to anxiety reduction at preschoolers through the prism of the implications upon conditioning factors and with the possibility to extend it to other ages.

The most important scientific values of the realized investigations are synthesized by the following general conclusions:

1. The anxiety is defined in the work through the prism of systemic approach which substantiates a multidimensional model of its understanding. We define anxiety either as a state linked with certain circumstances and situations limited in time which is characteristic to each individual, or as a stable personality trait which constantly manifests itself and does not depend of daily circumstances and situations, it is an individual predisposition to respond with anxiety.
2. We substantiated a psycho-diagnostic model with the help of which one can investigate the anxiety and its correlates at different stages of human development in an integrated manner. We consider that the presented and described methodology creates favorable conditions for other specialists (psychologists and school counselors) as well, in anxiety evaluation, but also in understanding the development laws of the affective sphere and personality of children and adolescents.
3. We elaborated and substantiated a new scientific vision regarding anxiety at different age stages in the context of new social realities of Republic of Moldova. This includes the following valuable contributions and conceptions: general mechanisms of the anxiety, the specifics of the anxiety and of ways of anxiety's manifestation at children and adolescents of different genders and ages, the characteristics of SA / AA, psycho-social and individual factors that cause anxiety, defining personality traits of children and adolescents with

anxiety. All the above mentioned are recognition criteria of anxiety in children and adolescents.

4. The anxiety in children and adolescents was conceptualized through essentiality of a range of laws and mechanisms: The anxiety is encountered from preschool period up to adolescence. We established that the anxiety in children and adolescents has both common and distinct features. We proved that out of all the investigated categories of age, the anxiety is the most intense at preschoolers. We underlined high anxiety in both preschool boys and girls. We proved that for junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents are common gender differences while showing anxiety. Junior schoolgirls, preadolescents and adolescents are more anxious. We figured out that the anxiety is most remarkable at the beginning and at the end of the age.
5. Defining for children and adolescents, is the fact that the anxiety is expressed by the following dimensions: AS, AT. AS is typical for preschoolers, juniors, preadolescents and adolescents. Additionally to AS, we emphasize AT for preadolescents and adolescents. AS at preschool and junior school stage is determined by new events, situations and circumstances and shows up through worries, concerns and distinct fears. The presence of AT at preadolescents and adolescents is mostly caused by persistent AS at previous development stages.
6. An important type of anxiety which is manifested in educational context is SA/AA. This dimension of the anxiety is an important one within the complex approach to anxiety. We established that SA is more vivid for junior schoolchildren. We concluded that junior schoolgirls, preadolescent girls and adolescent girls present more accentuated SA/AA. An innovative aspect in SA/AA concept was the investigation of the sources that favor it, offering new ideas, concepts and research openings in the field of anxiety reduction. The psycho-social determiners of SA are: feeling the social stress, fear of not corresponding to the expectations of the people around and problems and fears in relations with the teachers. From the individual factors we emphasized: the frustration of the need to be successful, the fear of self-affirmation, the fear of situations of knowledge checking and low physiologic resistance to stress.
7. The multi-aspect approach of the psycho-social and individual factors responsible for anxiety highlights that the presence of anxiety is explained by the new social realities: the conditions and modifications from the temporarily disintegrated family and one-parent family, and by social situation of development: family climate, the existent spiritual atmosphere between the

adults from the family, between adults and children, between children. An unfavorable family atmosphere, which lacks love and affection and where antipathy, unacceptance, doubt, misunderstandings, negative emotions, tension, worries and stress are dominant, causes anxiety. We also experimentally proved the influence of the personality components at the establishment of the anxiety. The very high self-appreciation of preschoolers and junior schoolchildren which supposes low level of reflexion development and permanent social comparison with other children condition anxiety. The fragmentary self-appreciation and self-confidence, usually negative, at preadolescents and adolescents can favor worry and anxiety. A reserved, distant and unfriendly interrelation with colleagues and peers, in preadolescence and adolescence determine an emphasized anxiety. We substantiated that the anxiety is a multidimensional response to the psycho-social conditions and/or to the individual psychological dimensions. The bigger the number of the factors that act upon the child and adolescent, the higher is the possibility of anxiety appearance.

8. We obtained scientific proofs which record the modifications produced in anxious junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents personality. Based on the investigations, we underline the following personality traits specific for children and adolescents with anxiety: reserve, rigidity, strain, frustration, agitation, irritation, overwork / breakdown, emotional character, addiction and affective immaturity, instability, impressionability, sensitivity, excessive prudence, timidity, timid attitude, sense of inferiority, self-doubt, uncertain and retained expression, exaggerated sensitivity, the need of group approval, obedience and modesty. As a result, the psychological portrait of the anxious child and adolescent was elaborated.
9. The innovative methodology proposed for anxiety reduction to preschoolers includes principles, directions, techniques, processes and ways, integrated from different well-organized and developed psychological orientations, beneficial for the anxious preschooler. The assurance of the psychological intervention model effectiveness was realized through the orientation to psycho-social factors (the involvement of important adults from the child's life in informative and formative activities) and individual factors (the development of personality components which favor anxiety: the development of positive emotional habits, of key elements of self-awareness, the development of independent, active, confident, courageous behavior and inhibitions removal, the development of verbal and non-verbal communication, the acquiring and development of relating and social integration and the development of creativity and

spontaneity). By the development of preschoolers' affectivity and personality, we contributed to their anxiety reduction.

10. The preschoolers included in the anxiety reduction program were taught how to manage anxiety, restlessness, fears and negative emotions they presently face, they also learnt creative-expressive techniques, relaxation and meditation exercises, as well as other practices of mindfulness type which they can use in daily situations in order to control, reduce and remove various emotional states.
11. The psychological interventions program favor collaboration relations between educators and parents and offers perspective openness in the development of these collaborations. The unfolded formative approach testifies research premises and proves that the application of the complex psychological interventions program regarding anxiety reduction is recommended starting with the preschool age and can be continued at junior school, preadolescence and adolescence stages.
12. The research results certify the resolution of the scientific problem and ground a new research direction in psychology – *The integrated approach to anxiety research at different age stages.*

Recommendations for implementations:

For educational institutions:

1. The creation of a thematic research framework in the field of Psychology of Anxiety.
2. With the purpose of optimization of the training of psychology specialists, we consider imperative, the necessity to continue the implementation of research results in educational process within higher education at the faculties of psychology (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, continuous training) through the diversification of subjects contents and through the organization of round tables, practical activities etc., regarding various aspects of anxiety, of affective sphere and child and adolescent personality development.
3. We consider it important to extend the obtained theoretical, methodological and practical results to preschool institutions and to schools, so that the psychologists, school counselors and academic staff could use them in the process of development and formation of a harmonious personality.

For psychological centers:

4. Connecting counselling and psycho-therapy activities to integrative substantiation of anxiety in the context of new social realities.
5. Training specialists in the field of affectivity and child and adolescent personality development through the prism of the insight into the investigation results, the suggested

psycho-diagnostic toolkit, the complex program of psychological interventions for solving the anxiety problem at children and adolescents.

For decision makers:

1. A clear substantiation of population mental health development policies within national strategic directions.
2. Training specialists in the field of psychology.

For research:

1. The realized investigational approach forwards new problems and directions among which we would mention the following: Psychology of anxiety in early childhood, Psychology of anxiety in adults, Fundamentals of anxiety reduction ways in adulthood.

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ADNOTARE

Racu Iulia. Psihologia anxietății la copii și adolescenți. Teză de doctor habilitat în psihologie, Chișinău, 2020

Structura tezei. Teza cuprinde adnotările, lista abrevierilor, introducere, șapte capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 276 de titluri, anexe și este perfectată pe 256 pagini, inclusiv 84 de figuri și 57 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 74 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte cheie: anxietate, tipurile de anxietate, anxietate școlară / anxietate academică, familie, climat familial, autoapreciere, încredere în sine, trăsături de personalitate, vârsta preșcolară, vârsta școlară mică, vârsta preadolescentă și vârsta adolescentă.

Scopul cercetării: fundamentarea teoretică și experimentală a fenomenului anxietății la diferite etape de vârstă în contextul noilor realități sociale, precum și configurarea unui model nou de intervenții psihologice orientat la diminuarea anxietății la preșcolari prin prisma implicațiilor asupra factorilor care o condiționează și cu posibilitate de extindere a acestuia și la alte vârste. **Obiectivele cercetării:** analiza și studierea literaturii de psihologie cu privire la anxietate, la metodele și instrumentele de diagnosticare a anxietății și corelatelor acesteia și la tehnicile, procedeele și modalitățile de diminuare a anxietății; evidențierea diferențelor de gen și de vârstă în manifestarea anxietății și a tipurilor de anxietate la copii și adolescenți; stabilirea caracteristicilor de gen și de vârstă în manifestarea anxietății școlare / anxietății academice și factorilor anxietății școlare la elevii mici, preadolescenți și adolescenți; identificarea factorilor psihosociali (componența familiei și climatul familial) și a celor individuali (autoapreciere, încredere în sine, curajul social, inițierea contactelor sociale) determinanți ai anxietății în preșcolaritate, în școlaritatea mică, în preadolescență și adolescență; identificarea trăsăturilor de personalitate caracteristice școlarilor mici, preadolescenților și adolescenților cu nivele distincte de anxietate; elaborarea, implementarea și evaluarea eficienței programului de intervenții psihologice în vederea diminuării anxietății la preșcolari; elaborarea concepției științifice cu referire la dezvoltarea anxietății la copii și adolescenți în contextul noilor realități sociale.

Noutatea și originalitatea rezultatelor cercetării constă în: fundamentarea teoretică și experimentală a fenomenului anxietății la diferite etape de vârstă în contextul noilor realități sociale axată pe investigarea diferențelor de gen și de vârstă în manifestarea anxietății (anxietății școlare / anxietății academice), a factorilor psihosociali și individuali determinanți ai acesteia și a trăsăturilor de personalitate ale copilului și adolescentului anxios; edificarea unei definiții cu caracter integrator al conceptului de anxietate dedus din analiza abordărilor și explicațiilor existente menite să realizeze o reconsiderare a tuturor definițiilor; stabilirea caracterului specific al anxietății, redimensionarea modalităților de manifestare a anxietății (anxietatea situațională și anxietatea ca trăsătură), evidențierea interacțiunii integrative a factorilor determinanți ai acesteia și a particularităților modelării trăsăturilor de personalitate în contextul dezvoltării de la preșcolaritate la adolescență; conceptualizarea unui model psihodiagnostic pentru studiul integrat și profund al anxietății și a corelatelor acesteia la diferite etape ale dezvoltării; prospectarea unui portret psihologic al copilului și adolescentului cu anxietate bazat pe o abordare integrativă a legităților și mecanismelor constitutive ale anxietății și corelatelor acesteia; conceperea și validarea unui nou model de intervenții psihologice orientat la diminuarea anxietății la preșcolari prin prisma implicațiilor asupra factorilor care o condiționează și cu posibilitate de extindere a acestuia și la alte vârste.

Noua direcție de cercetare: *Abordarea integrată a cercetării anxietății la diferite etape de vârstă.*

Semnificația teoretică a lucrării: fundamentarea unei teorii a anxietății care are la bază: definirea și conceptualizarea holistică a acesteia de la preșcolaritate la adolescență din perspectivă de gen, de vârstă, a modalităților distincte de manifestare, a sintezei factorilor determinanți (psihosociali și individuali) și a modificărilor în trăsăturile de personalitate; conceptualizarea fenomenului anxietății prin prisma legităților și mecanismelor explicative ale acesteia ca parte integrantă a dezvoltării sferei afective și a personalității copiilor și adolescenților; fundamentarea demersului de dezvoltare a afectivității și a elementelor cheie ale personalității preșcolarului orientat la diminuarea anxietății cu extinderea acestuia și la vârstele ulterioare de dezvoltare; dezvoltarea unei noi teorii cu privire la anxietate la copii și adolescenți împreună cu modelul psihodiagnostic și cel de intervenții psihologice propuse pentru evaluarea și diminuarea anxietății completează și îmbogățesc bazele teoretice ale științei psihologice cu cunoștințe ample. **Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării:** conceptualizarea unei metodologii de diagnosticare și examinare a anxietății ce poate fi extinsă și în investigarea sferei afective și cea a personalității aplicabilă la nivel individual și de grup la copii și adolescenți; validarea modelului de intervenții psihologice bazat pe implicațiile asupra factorilor condiționanți ai anxietății constituit din tehnici expresiv-creative și exerciții de relaxare, meditații și alte tipuri de practici de tip mindfulness pentru diminuarea într-o manieră originală și inovativă atât a anxietății cât și a diverselor probleme în aria sferei afective și cea a personalității la preșcolari și copiii de altă vârstă; posibilitatea, demonstrată experimental, de valorificare în sistemul național de asistență psihologică a modelului psihodiagnostic și cel de intervenții psihologice în vederea studiului și diminuării anxietății la diferite etape de vârstă; evidențierea particularităților anxietății și a problematicii corelate cu aceasta permite determinarea direcțiilor esențiale de optimizare a dezvoltării emoționale și a personalității copiilor și adolescenților; formularea unui set de recomandări pentru părinți și cadre didactice cu referire la diminuarea anxietății și a problemelor adiacente la copii și adolescenți.

Implementarea rezultatelor cercetării. Rezultatele teoretico-experimentale au fost implementate în cadrul programelor stat și proiectelor naționale, în cadrul programelor de mobilitate internațională Erasmus +, în procesul didactic de pregătire și formare a studenților, masteranzilor și doctoranzilor la facultățile de psihologie din instituțiile superioare de învățământ din Republica Moldova, în cadrul cursurilor de formare continuă și în cadrul seminarelor științifico-metodice cu psihologii școlari, educatorii și cadrele didactice.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Раку Юлия. Психология тревожности у детей и юношей. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора habilitat в психологии. Кишинэу, 2020

Структура диссертации. Диссертация состоит из аннотаций, списка сокращений, введения, семи глав, общих выводов и рекомендаций, библиографии из 276 названий, приложений, 256 страниц основного текста и включает 84 рисунков и 57 таблиц. Результаты исследования опубликованы в 74 научных работах.

Ключевые слова: тревожность, виды тревожности, школьная тревожность / академическая тревожность, семья, семейный климат, самооценка, уверенность в себе, черты личности, дошкольный, младший школьный, подростковый и юношеский возраста.

Цель исследования: теоретическое обоснование и экспериментальное изучение феномена тревожности на разных возрастных этапах в контексте новых социальных реалий, а также разработка и апробирование новой модели психологической интервенции, направленной на снижение тревожности у дошкольников, которая воздействует на факторы, ее обуславливающие, а также возможности использования и применения авторской модели в других возрастных группах. **Задачи исследования:** анализ и изучение психологической литературы по тревожности, методов и техник диагностики тревожности и ее видов, а также приемов и способов снижения тревожности; выделение гендерных и возрастных различий в проявлении тревожности и ее видов у детей, подростков и юношей; установление гендерных и возрастных характеристик в проявлении школьной / академической тревожности и факторов школьной тревожности у младших школьников, подростков и старшеклассников; выявление психосоциальных факторов (состав семьи и семейный климат) и индивидуальных детерминант тревожности (самооценка, уверенность в себе, социальная смелость, установление социальных контактов) в дошкольном, младшем школьном, подростковом и юношеском возрасте; выявление личностных черт, характерных для младших школьников, подростков и юношей с высоким уровнем тревожности; разработка, апробирование и оценка эффективности авторской программы психологической интервенции с целью снижения тревожности у дошкольников; разработка научной концепции развития тревожности у детей, подростков и юношеском возрасте в контексте новых социальных реалий.

Новизна и оригинальность результатов исследования заключаются в теоретическом и экспериментальном обосновании феномена тревожности на разных возрастных этапах в контексте новых социальных реалий, которое было направлено на изучение гендерных и возрастных различий в проявлении тревожности и ее видов (школьная тревожность / академическая тревожность), психосоциальных и индивидуальных детерминант тревожности, а также установлении черт личности тревожного ребенка, подростка и старшеклассника; создание интегративного и концептуального понятия тревожности, которое опирается на анализ существующих подходов и научных объяснительных трактовок, обеспечившее дальнейшее углубление научного определения феномена; установление специфического характера тревожности и изменение способов ее проявления в зависимости от вида (ситуативная тревожность и тревожность как черта), выделение интегративного взаимодействия ее детерминант и особенностей моделирования личностных черт личности ребенка на протяжении развития от дошкольного до юношеского возраста; концептуализация психодиагностической модели для комплексного и глубокого изучения тревоги и ее коррелятов на разных этапах развития; разработка психологических портретов тревожного ребенка и старшеклассника, основанных на интегративном подходе, обобщении закономерностей и базовых механизмов тревожности и ее коррелятов; разработка и апробирование новой модели психологической интервенции, направленной на снижение тревожности у дошкольников через воздействие на факторы, ее обуславливающие, а также возможности распространения авторской модели на другие возрасты.

Новое направление исследований: *Комплексный и интегративный подход к изучению тревожности на разных возрастных этапах.*

Теоретическая значимость исследования: создание теории тревожности, основанной на ее целостном и концептуальном понимании на разных возрастных этапах от дошкольного до подросткового и юношеского возрастов с точки зрения гендера, различных вариантов и способов проявления, синтеза детерминант (психосоциальных и индивидуальных) и специфики личностных черт; осмысление феномена тревожности через призму ее закономерностей и механизмов как важной составляющей развития аффективной сферы и личности детей, подростков и юношей; теоретическое обоснование подхода к развитию аффективности и ключевых элементов личности дошкольника, ориентированных на снижение тревожности и возможности его применения на других возрастных этапах; разработка новой теории тревожности у детей и юношей, а также предложены психодиагностическая модель для оценивания и авторская модель психологической интервенции для снижения тревожности, которые обогащают и комплектуют теоретические основы психологической науки новыми обширными знаниями.

Практическое значение исследования: концептуализация методологии диагностики и оценивания тревожности, которая может быть распространена на изучение аффективной сферы и личности, применимой на индивидуальном и групповом уровне к детям и старшеклассникам; валидация авторской модели психологической интервенции, основанной на влиянии на факторы тревожности и состоящей из экспрессивно-творческих техник и упражнений на расслабление, медитаций и других практик осознанности для снижения оригинальным и новаторским способом, как тревоги, так и решения различных проблем в области аффективной сферы и личности дошкольников и детей старшего возраста; экспериментально продемонстрирована возможность использования моделей психодиагностики и психологической интервенции для изучения и снижения тревожности на разных возрастных этапах в системе национальной психологической помощи и образовательном пространстве, в целом; выделение особенностей тревожности и связанных с ней проблем позволило определить главные направления оптимизации эмоционального развития и личности детей и юношей; разработка комплекса рекомендаций для родителей и дидактических кадров по снижению тревожности и проблем, связанных с ней у детей и юношей.

Внедрение результатов исследования. Теоретико-экспериментальные результаты: нашли отражение в государственных программах; были использованы в национальных проектах, а также в программах международной мобильности Erasmus+; были включены в учебные курсы в процессе обучения и подготовки студентов, магистрантов и докторантов на факультетах психологии в вузах Молдовы; были представлены дидактическим кадрам на курсах непрерывного обучения и повышения квалификации и школьным психологам, воспитателям и учителям в рамках научно-методических семинаров.

ANNOTATION

Racu Iulia. Psychology of anxiety in children and adolescents. Habilitated Doctor of Psychology Thesis. Chişinău, 2020

Thesis structure. The thesis comprises the annotations, the list of abbreviations, an introduction, seven chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography of 276 titles, annexes, and consists of 256 pages, including 84 figures and 57 tables. The obtained results are published in 74 scientific works.

Keywords: anxiety, types of anxiety, school anxiety/academic anxiety, family, family climate, self-appreciation, self-confidence, personality traits, preschool age, junior school age, preadolescent age and adolescent age.

The purpose of the research: theoretical and experimental grounding of the phenomenon of anxiety at different age levels in the context of new social realities, as well as the configuration of a new psychological intervention model oriented to anxiety reduction in preschoolers through the prism of implications on its conditioning factors with the possibility of its extension to other ages as well. **Research objectives:** analysis and study of specialized literature regarding anxiety, the methods and instruments of anxiety and its correlates diagnosis, and the techniques, procedures and ways of anxiety reduction; underlining gender and age differences in anxiety manifestation and anxiety types in children and adolescents; establishing gender and age features in manifesting school/academic anxiety and school anxiety factors at junior students, preadolescents and adolescents; identification of psycho-social factors (family composition and climate) and of the individual ones (self-assessment, self-confidence, social courage, initiation of social contacts) determining anxiety at preschool, early school, preadolescence and adolescence periods; identification of personality traits typical to junior schoolchildren, preadolescents and adolescents with distinct levels of anxiety; elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the psychological intervention program effectiveness regarding anxiety reduction in preschoolers; elaboration of the scientific concept regarding the development of anxiety in children and adolescents in the context of new social realities.

Novelty and originality: of research results consists in: theoretical and experimental grounding of the anxiety phenomenon at different age levels in the context of new social realities based on the investigation of gender and age differences in anxiety manifestation (school anxiety/academic anxiety), of psychosocial and individual factors determining it and of personality traits of the anxious child and adolescent; building a definition with integratory character of the concept of anxiety deduced from the analysis of existing approaches and explanations aimed at realizing a reconsidering of all the definitions; establishing the specific character of anxiety, re-dimensioning the ways of anxiety manifestation (situational anxiety and anxiety as a trait), underlining integrative interaction of its determining factors and of the features of personality traits modelling in the context of development from preschool stage to adolescence; conceptualizing a psycho-diagnosis model for integrated and deep study of anxiety and its correlates at different development stages; prospecting a psychological portrait of the child and adolescent with anxiety, based on an integrative approach of constructive regularities and mechanisms of anxiety and its correlates; conceiving and validation of a new psychological interventions model oriented to diminishing anxiety in preschoolers through the prism of the implications on the conditioning factors and with the possibility of extending it to other ages.

New research direction: The integrated approach to anxiety research at different age stages.

Theoretical significance of the work: grounding a theory of anxiety based on: holistic definition and conceptualizing of it from preschool to adolescence level from the perspective of gender, age, distinct ways of manifestation, of synthesis of determining factors (psycho-social and individual) and of modifications in personality traits; conceptualization of the anxiety phenomenon through the prism of its explanatory lawfulness and mechanisms as an integrated part of the affective sphere and of the personality of the child and adolescent development; grounding the approach of development of affectivity and preschooler's personality key elements oriented to anxiety diminishing with its extension to subsequent ages of development; the development of a new theory regarding anxiety in children and adolescents together with the psycho-diagnostic model and that of psychological interventions suggested for the assessment and diminishing of the anxiety complete and enrich the theoretical fundamentals of the psychological science with ample knowledge. **The applicative value of the work:** conceptualizing a methodology of diagnostic and examination of the anxiety which can also be extended in the investigation of the affective sphere and that of the personality applicable at individual and group level to children and adolescents; the validation of the psychological intervention model based on the implications on anxiety conditioning factors, constituted of expressive-creative techniques and relaxation exercises, meditations and other types of practices like mindfulness for diminishing in an original and innovative manner both anxiety and different problems from the area of affective sphere and that of the personality at preschoolers and children of other ages; the possibility, experimentally proved, by the valorization in the national system of psychological assistance/support of the psycho-diagnostic and psychological intervention models regarding study and diminishing anxiety at different age; underlining the features of the anxiety and of the problems correlated with it allows the determination of the essential directions for the optimization of emotional and personality development of children and adolescents; formulating a set of recommendations for parents and academic staff referring to diminishing anxiety and related problems at children and adolescents.

Implementation of research results: The theoretic-experimental results have been implemented within state programs and national projects, within Erasmus+ international mobility program, within the didactic process while training and forming Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students from the Psychology faculties of higher education institutions, within continuous training courses, within scientific-methodological seminars for school psychologist and counselors and teaching staff.

RACU IULIA

PSYCHOLOGY OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Summary to the Thesis of Habilitated Doctor of Psychology
Speciality 511.02 – Development Psychology and Educational Psychology

Approved for printing: 25.09.20

Paper size 60x84 1/16

Offset paper. Offset printing.

Edition 30 ex.

Printing sheets 3,59

Order No

The Summary was printed at „Ion Creangă” SPU of Chişinău Printing house,
1 Ion Creangă St.