

**„ION CREANGĂ” STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY
CHIȘINAU, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Manuscript code:

C.Z.U: 159.923-055.2(043.2)=111

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY SENSE BY
ACTIVATING THE PERSONAL RESOURCES OF WOMEN ABUSED IN CHILDHOOD**

Speciality 511.02 – Development psychology and educational psychology

Abstract of PhD Thesis in Psychology

CHISINAU, 2022

The thesis was developed within the Doctoral School of Psychology of the „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University.

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The defense will take place on **27.12.2022, 12.00**, in the meeting of Doctoral Thesis Defense Board of the Doctoral School of Psychology of „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University, Chisinau (1 Ion Creangă street, block 2, Senate Hall).

The doctoral thesis in psychology and the abstract can be consulted at the Scientific Library of the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chisinau and on the ANACEC website (www.cnaa.md).

The abstract was sent on 24.11.2022.

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THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance of the researched topic. The psychological security of women who were abused in childhood represents a sociocultural phenomenon that must be analyzed, taking into consideration multiple perspectives. Research shows that child abuse and neglect are reasons that can influence the development of low self-esteem or the manifestation of risky behaviors and self-harm, which, as a result, can generate social and emotional problems. Children who have learned to express their dissatisfaction through impulsivity will show increased aggression or anxiety in adulthood. This fact changes their way of relating and socializing.

The present dissertation emphasizes the severity of the consequences of childhood abuse that occur in adulthood. These issues are analyzed from the perspective of several factors: the sense of psychological security expressed through attachment bonds in women who were abused in childhood, their personality traits, and their existing resources that can be reactivated (self-esteem, resilience, the way they react in situations of stress: hostility and its forms, cognitive-emotional, and behavioral coping strategies). As children, these women adopted some patterns of behavior from resource people (parents, grandmothers, relatives), including those associated with abuse, without realizing the serious consequences of abuse on their behavior in relation to loved ones, even when they were adults.

The description of the situation in the research area and the identification of the research problem

The feeling of psychological security is a concept recently introduced in psychology. However, it is the basis of every person's development, from an early age. The consequences concerning the development of sense of security influence the quality of the adult's life and his relationships with other people.

The concepts of psychological security, environment; and protection of a person's identity have been studied by several authors: K. Horney [16], M. Ainsworth [1, 2], J. Bowlby [5, 6], M. Klein [18], A. Maslow [21]; E. Raffauf [24] emphasized a connection with self-esteem; T.V Eksacusto and N.A. Lîz [36] – with the dynamic balance of the subject and with the influence of actions from the external and internal environment, which allow the person to preserve his integrity; I. B. Iamandescu [17] observed a relationship between these concepts and the importance of parents' behavior toward children; I.A. Baeva and N.N. Baev [34, 35] defined the term in connection with stability seeking, and its achievement, which may vanish at the first sign of danger. As a result, the child's mental development is influenced by his emotional bond with loved ones and its characteristics. P. T. Davies and E.M. Cummings [apud 10] demonstrated a direct link between the child's psychological security and the parents' emotions. This fact influenced our interest in

studying the implications of attachment; Also, J. Bowlby [5], M. Ainsworth [1, 2], M. Klein [18] consider that the attachment between mother and child has a strong impact on the development of the child's potential.

The problem of the research is determined by the contradiction that denotes, on the one hand, the lack of studying the feeling of psychological security in women abused in childhood and, on the other, the need to develop a psychological intervention program aimed at activating personal resources and training security in these women: how the development of psychological security in women abused in childhood can be theoretically and methodologically substantiated by activating personal resources.

The purpose of the research was to investigate the feeling of psychological security in women who had been abused as children, analyze their personal resources, as security-related factors, and develop a program in order to strengthen psychological security and activate personal resources in women subjected to abuse.

To achieve the cited purpose, the following **objectives** were formulated:

- determining the presence of abuse and the types of abuse women were subjected to in childhood;
- studying the feeling of psychological security in abused and non-abused women, as children, by determining the type of attachment;
- comparative analysis of the type of attachment, considering the forms of abuse;
- establishing the highlights of the personality in women who were abused in childhood;
- identifying the level of self-esteem in women abused in childhood, compared to those who were not abused;
- determining the level of hostility among the women included in the research;
- establishing resilience in abused and non-abused women in childhood;
- evaluation of coping strategies frequently used by experimental subjects;
- developing and implementing a program to strengthen the feeling of psychological security by activating personal resources in women subjected to childhood abuse;
- drawing conclusions concerning the ascertainment and training experiment.

The theoretical support of the research: *theories and concepts regarding psychological security and attachment:* K. Horney, K. M. Ainsworth, J. Bowlby, M. Main, A. Maslow, O. Bejenaru, A. Bolboceanu, E. Raffauf, P. T. Davies, E.M. Cummings, I.B. Iamandescu et al. [1, 2, 5, 6, 16, 17, 21]; *theories on the abusive relationship between parents and children:* J. Burnham, S.B. Karpman, J. Hearn, K. Killen et al. Also, this problem was studied by M. Klein [18], E. Danto [12] in *psychoanalytic theory*; A. Bandura [3, 32], M. E. Seligman [28], S. F. Maier [20], R. J. Gelles [7]

- in the *theory of social learning and learned helplessness*. In the *conceptions of personality theory*: K. Grossmann, C. Rogers [13]; *psychoanalysis*: S. Freud, C. Jung, S. Stark [13, 16]; *gestalt therapy*: F. Perls, L. Perls, P. Goodman, D. Mann [13]; *nonviolent communication*: M. B. Rosenberg [26], *integrative psychotherapy*: I. Dafinoiu [11]. Undisputed research concerning the theory of cerebral localizations of emotional life (hostility, and enmity) was carried out by D. Goleman, who spoke about the "stores of emotions" [apud 13]. This problem was also studied by J. F. Le Doux, L. Brothers, W. Hirst, N. Herman, G. Rizzolatti [apud 13, 17] etc.

We have also analyzed the opinions of J. Walker. In his theory concerning the *cycle of violence*, he emphasized the critical stages that a couple that is experiencing violence goes through [32]. Also, he outlined that a child may not fit his parents' expectations, and this fact can lead to abusive situations; A. Hadley, B. Carter, and M. McGoldrick mentioned about *violence as a non-adjustment reaction to family crises because of a lack of conjugal harmony during transitions* [apud 32]. H. Bragg highlighted that a child who was subjected to violence in childhood can take over *abusive behavior* in adulthood. C. Wenar, P. Kerig, and B. Spilsbury [apud 31] emphasized the consequences of child abuse in terms of emotional and behavioral stress reactions, including trauma; M. Rosenbaum [25] mentioned about the taking over the *parent model*; and M. Seligman [20, 28] centered on *search and adaptation activities, as well as on the theory of learned helplessness*.

Recovery from childhood abuse and activation of personal resources in women who have been abused as children, as a problem, has been analyzed in several theories, conceptions, and ideas in the field of *psychology of age, social, systemic, couple, and family psychology* - M. Nichols, R. Schwartz [apud 32], V. Satir [27] or *family psychotherapy* from the humanistic-experiential field - I. Mitrofan, from the field of *group psychotherapy* - I. Yalom, I. Dafinoiu, Raymond A. Levy, J. Stuart Ablon, H. Kachele [apud 11, 13] or through intervention in *the psychotherapy of anxious and depressive disorders* - Iu. Racu [22], A. Verdeş [33], through *integrative psychotherapy* - I. Dafinoiu [11] et al.

At the same time, the *theories and concepts regarding personal resources* that can be activated when the person learns various skills and coping strategies were researched. Identification and activation of personal resources were studied as *coping strategies* by S. Folkman and R. S. Lazarus [19]. *Psychosocial resources* and *personality potential* were highlighted by S. E. Hobfoll [15], L. Silvern, L. Kaersvang [29]. M. Rosenbaum, K. Smira, R. Rosenberg, D. Sîmboteanu [25, 26, 30], T. Constantin [apud 32] discussed *personal resources, sense of control and social support, self-esteem*; M. Rosenbaum and C. Smira [25] - the *ability to activate personal resources* - A. Bandura, A. Maslow, Iu. Racu [3, 21, 22] - the *combination of cognition and behavior*.

Scientific research methodology was based on *theoretical methods* (analysis and synthesis of specialized literature; hypothetical-deductive method for the interpretation and explanation of the

research results); *empirical methods* (observation, conversation, questionnaire, test, ascertainment and control experiments, psychological interventions); *Childhood Abuse Screening Scale* (B. Sanders and E. Becker-Lausen); *AAS – Adult Attachment Scale* - Attachment screening questionnaire (N. L. Collins and S. J. Read); *Personality questionnaire* (H. Leongard and H. Schieschek); *RSS - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (Morris Rosenberg - Self-Esteem Scale - RSES); *Hostility Inventory* (Arnold H. Buss and Ann Durkee); *Resilience Test* (translated and adjusted by Monica David); *CERQ – Cognitive-emotional coping questionnaire* (N. Garnefski, V. Kraaij, P. Spinhoven); *SACS – Strategic Approach to Coping Scale* (Stevan E. Hobfoll, Carla L. Dunahoo, J. Monnier, Michael R. Hulsizier, and Robert Johnson); *mathematical and statistical methods* – SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer program, version 21, and the data illustration was carried out by means of the Microsoft Excel program. The research results are presented in interval data, with a symmetrical distribution of the data. This fact allowed the use of parametric methods of statistical processing of the information: the *student T test* – for independent samples; ANOVA analysis of variance – for assessing the difference in ranks between more than two independent samples; calculation of *Pearson* correlation coefficients for determining the size of a relationship between two variables; the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* test; the *Levene* homogeneity test; *Post-Hoc* analysis (Games – Howel and Turkey HSD); the *Mann-Whitney* test – for the assessment of the hypotheses regarding the differences between two independent samples and the *Wilcoxon* test – for the comparison between paired samples.

The novelty and originality of the research consist in the fact that, for the first time at the national level, the consequences of childhood abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect) were studied in mature women. The research focused on the feeling of psychological security, personality traits, the level of self-esteem, resilience, hostility, cognitive-emotional and behavioral coping strategies, and the ability to reactivate the resources that facilitate the strengthening of the feeling of psychological security.

For the first time in the Republic of Moldova, a comparative study was conducted in order to identify the differences between women who were abused in childhood and those who did not experience abuse in childhood. At the same time, a psychological intervention program was implemented to develop a sense of security by activating the personal resources of the women involved in the program.

The results that contribute to solving the scientific problem consist of outlining the nature of the feeling of psychological security in women who had been abused in childhood and identifying their internal resources, in order to activate them through a special intervention program, and to overcome security deficiencies or psychological insecurity.

The consequences of childhood abuse are long-lasting and significantly influence the quality of women's life as adults. Abusive events have an essential impact on the development of psychological security and attachment. This fact indicates that women who were abused in childhood have a different personality profile than women who were not abused in childhood.

At the same time, the experimental results show that after reactivating personal resources, women who were abused in childhood can improve their quality of life by building affectionate relationships with loved ones, assuming responsibilities, and developing a level of flexibility and acceptance of reality.

The theoretical value of the research consists of designing and implementing a psychological intervention program that is focused on the development of a feeling of security by activating personal resources. We believe that, by means of this thesis, we have enhanced the field with new data concerning the attachment type, self-esteem level, resilience, hostility, coping strategies, and personal resources of women who were abused in childhood and those who did not have similar experiences. Thus, the thesis provides theoretical support for psychological and interdisciplinary studies centered on the concepts of psychological security, attachment, trauma, abuse, and personal resources.

Applicative value. The research results are of interest to both students and specialists in the field. The psychological intervention program can serve as a basis for the development of other psychological intervention programs for women abused in childhood. Also, this information is useful for psychologists, psychological counselors, psychotherapists, teachers, social workers, lawyers, representatives of NGOs and Associations for the Protection of Persons in Risk Situations, Directorates for the Protection of Children's Rights and Directorates of Social Assistance and of Family Protection.

Implementation of scientific results. The data obtained can be used to develop social policies regarding domestic violence. The research results are included in the student's study program as a practical material for social assistance courses at the International Free University of Moldova: 1. Prevention of family violence: policies and strategies; and 2. Systemic assistance in cases of violence in the family, at the high school level. In the master's cycle, in the field of health and social services management, information was included for the courses: 1. *Counseling and family therapy*; and 2. *Comprehensive assistance in cases of family violence*, for some seminars and debates concerning family violence, psychological security, and attachment.

Approval of the research results. The results of the investigation were discussed and approved during the meetings of the supervision committee, after psychological counseling activities offered to abused women; they were also debated during national and international scientific conferences that were organized by the State Pedagogical University "Ion Creangă", the

International Free University of Moldova, the State University of Moldova and the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi, Romania. Also, the information was presented at various seminars, and workshops.

Some important aspects of the study were disseminated at the following events: the Scientific conference "Prevention of harassment: reality and legislative solutions", November 26-27, 2021, organized by the Faculty of Law of USM, in collaboration with UN Women Moldova; the Conference "Child rights education: experiences and perspectives in preschool and primary education", November 26, 2021, organized by UPS "Ion Creangă", Faculty of Educational Sciences and Computer Science, "Clasa Viitorului", "Save the Children", CIDDC, ERIKS; the Conference "Psychosocial aspects of psychological security and its social manifestations in children", Chisinau, October 29, 2021; The International Scientific Conference "The Contemporary Issues of the Socio-Humanistic Sciences: International Scientific Conference, 11th-12th Edition" ("Contemporary issues of the Socio-Humanistic Sciences"), dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, Chisinau, December 5-6, 2019; the conference "Initial and continuous training of psychologists in child protection from violence", Chisinau, October 26, 2018.

Publications on thesis subject: 10 scientific works, among which: 2 articles in national magazines, 1 article in an international magazine, and 8 articles in conference materials.

The size and structure of the thesis: the work consists of preliminaries (annotation in three languages, list of abbreviations, list of figures and tables), an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography of 278 titles and 4 annexes; the basic text of the thesis consists of 148 pages, including 45 figures and 34 tables.

Keywords: psychological safety, attachment, violence, abuse, trauma, personal resources, abused women, cognitive-emotional and behavioral strategies.

THESIS CONTENT

In the **INTRODUCTION** we have stated the arguments and importance of the research subject, described the situation in the research field, and formulated the purpose, objectives, investigation hypotheses, and results in order to contribute to solving the scientific problem. The scientific novelty of the work and its theoretical importance and applicative value are highlighted and substantiated.

In Chapter 1 - "Theoretical approaches concerning the feeling of psychological security in women abused in childhood"— we have made a complex presentation of the theories regarding the feeling of psychological security, attachment, self-esteem, etc., through the perspective of three sections: *Theoretical concepts regarding the feeling psychological security; Abuse and its long-term consequences in women; and The personal resources of women abused in childhood.*

We have also described the existing research in the field and the diversity of scientific opinions that emphasize the process of developing the feeling of psychological security, the importance of attachment in the formation of psychological security, the forms of abuse and their immediate and long-term consequences - at maturity, and the cycle of violence and Karpman's triangle.

In Chapter 2 - "*Experimental research on the feeling of psychological security and personal resources in women abused in childhood*" - the research methodology is presented: the purpose, the objectives, the hypotheses, and the confirmatory experimental results. The experimental research was carried out during 2017–2018. Initially, 175 women were selected, of whom 97 were abused in childhood (a fact known from their anamnesis and from their records at the Directorate of Social Assistance for the Protection of Families and Children) and 78 were not abused as children. Before the ascertainment stage, women expressed their voluntary consent to participate in the research.

The **purpose** of the observational study referred to the analysis of psychological security feelings in women subjected to childhood abuse and the internal resources they use in situations of insecurity.

The **objectives** of the ascertainment procedure were the following: 1) determining the presence of abuse and the types of abuse to which women were subjected in childhood; 2) studying the feeling of psychological security in abused and non-abused women in childhood, by determining the type of attachment; 3) comparative determination of the type of attachment according to the forms of abuse; 4) establishing personality accentuations in women who were abused as children; 5) identifying the level of self-esteem in women abused in childhood compared to those who were not abused; 6) determination of hostility in women included in the research; 7) establishment of resilience in the case of abused women and those who were not abused in childhood; 8) evaluation of coping strategies that are frequently used by experimental subjects; 9) formulating the conclusions of the ascertainment experiment.

In the observational experiment, we launched the following **general hypothesis**: when compared to non-abused women, abused women use fewer internal resources to overcome psychological insecurity. The general hypothesis allowed the **operational hypotheses** to be launched: **Hypothesis 1**. We assume that there are differences regarding the type of attachment in women who were abused in childhood compared to those who were not abused; **Hypothesis 2**. We believe that the personality profile of abused women differs from that of non-abused women; **Hypothesis 3**. We estimate that the level of self-esteem is lower in women subjected to childhood abuse compared to those who have not experienced such experiences; **Hypothesis 4**. We assume that women who were not abused in childhood are, in adulthood, more resilient to stress compared to those abused in childhood; **Hypothesis 5**. We admit that women subjected to childhood abuse have a higher level of hostility compared to non-abused women; **Hypothesis 6**. We assume that women subjected to childhood abuse use maladaptive cognitive-emotional and behavioral coping strategies, but those who were not abused apply adaptive coping strategies; **Hypothesis 7**. We estimate a connection between the psychological security (established by attachment) of women abused in childhood and its influence on: self-esteem, resilience, types of hostility, and cognitive-emotional and behavioral coping strategies.

The variables of the ascertainment experiment are the following:

The dependent variable is represented by the states of psychological insecurity in childhood and it is expressed by the type of attachment developed. *Independent variables*: 1) self-esteem; 2) resilience; 3) hostility and its forms; 4) cognitive-emotional and behavioral coping strategies.

Tools that were used: "Abuse and Trauma Screening Scale", developed by B. Sanders, E. Becker-Lausen; "Attachment Questionnaire", elaborated by N.L. Collins and S.J. Read (AAS – Adult Attachment Scale); "Personality questionnaire" - elaborated by H. Leongard, H. Schmieschek; "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSS), developed by the American sociologist Morris Rosenberg (Self-Esteem Scale - RSES); "The Hostility Inventory," by Arnold H. Buss and Ann Durkee; "Test of resilience", translated and adapted by Monica David; CERQ – "Cognitive Emotional Coping Questionnaire", developed by Garnefski, Kraaij, Spinhoven; SACS –by Stevan E. Hobfoll, Carla L. Dunahoo, J. Monnier, Michael R. Hulsizier and Robert Johnson.

The experimental research results:

The result of the "Scale for detecting abuse and trauma" allowed us to form two groups: group I - Women who were not abused in childhood - 78, and group II - Women abused in childhood - 97. The age of the women in the research group is between 20 and 35 years, with the average age of the group being 27.4 years.

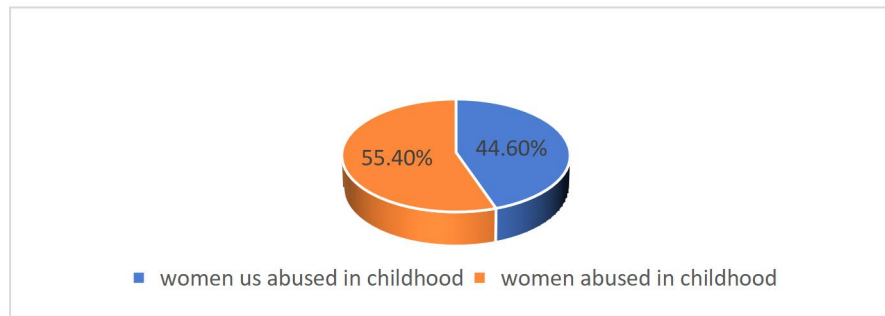


Fig. 1. Percentage of women abused or not abused as children

The women subjected to abuse in childhood (from the sample of Group II) were distributed according to the predominant form of the abuse: a higher frequency of physical abuse in childhood was registered – 18.30% (32 women); 16.0% (28 women) were emotionally abused; 12.0% (21 women) were in situations of neglect in childhood and the lowest level belongs to women sexually abused in childhood – 9.10% (16 women).

The result of the "Attachment Questionnaire", developed by Collins and Read (AAS - Adult Attachment Scale), allowed us to determine the differences between the two groups in the variable of the predominant type of attachment, on *the basis of which psychological security is formed at maturity*. The results obtained during the test allowed us to identify the three types of attachment that are present in both batches but with different average values (Figure 2.6.):

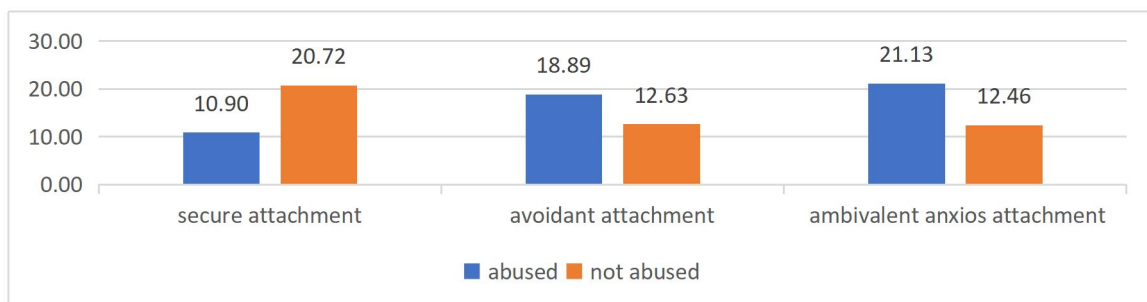


Fig. 2. Average values of attachment in abused or non-abused women in childhood

The comparative analysis (taking into consideration the presence or absence of childhood abuse) allowed us to identify statistically significant differences via the T-Student: *test for attachment types*. Thus, for the *secure attachment variable*, statistically significant differences were obtained between women who have not been abused in childhood (M=20.72, SD=3.69) and women who have been subjected to abuse in childhood (M=10.90, SD=2.33), with the value of $t_{123.992}=20.407$, at a materiality threshold of $p=0.001$. Living in a safe environment and consistency in discipline, applied by parents, gave women who had not been abused in childhood a sense of psychological security, which was expressed by a higher mean value on the secure attachment style.

The *secure attachment* variable values obtained from women who were abused in childhood differ and are dependent on the type of abuse. Physically abused women have average values: (M =

10.78, SD = 2.05) when compared to sexually abused women: (M = 10.44, SD = 1.86), emotionally abused women: (M = 10.18, SD = 1.92), or abused through neglect (M = 12.38, SD = 2.97). The research results emphasized that the consequences of childhood abuse influence the development of attachment in adulthood. Emotionally and sexually abused women have the lowest values of secure attachment, and this fact can be explained by adults' practice of subjecting them to abuse (as children) in a more severe form or for a longer period of time. For the *avoidant attachment variable*, the average values of physically abused women in childhood: (M=20.88, SD=3.27) and of sexually abused women: (M=19.31, SD=3.15) are higher compared to the values of emotionally abused women: (M=16.68, SD=2.73) and those abused through neglect: (M=18.48, SD=3.21). In this study, also, we have compared the existing differences in the anxious-ambivalent attachment variable. The average values for sexually abused women: (M = 22.81, SD = 4.23) and emotionally abused women: (M = 22.36, SD = 3.99) are higher than those for physically abused women in childhood: (M = 19.03, SD = 3.71) and those abused through neglect in childhood: (M = 21.43, SD = 3.74).

The results of the "Personality Questionnaire": Childhood abuse influences the *personality profile of abused women compared to that of non-abused women in childhood*. There are statistically significant differences in the following accentuated personality traits: *uncontrollability* (mean value – for women subjected to abuse in childhood: M=12.71, SD=4.39, compared to the mean value in women who were not abused in childhood: M=11.09, SD=5.06, $t_{173}=-2.266$, $p=0.025$). Concerning the *dysthymia* - (mean value - for women abused in childhood: M=12.76, SD=4.57 and a mean value - for women who were not abused: M=9.41, SD=5.08, with the value of $t_{173}=-4, 58$, $p=0.0001$). *Anxiety* - (mean values for women who were not abused in childhood: M=13.59, SD=5.66 and for women abused in childhood: M=16.51 SD=4.60, with differences statistically significant: the value $t_{147.329}=-3.673$, at a materiality threshold: $p=0.0001$).

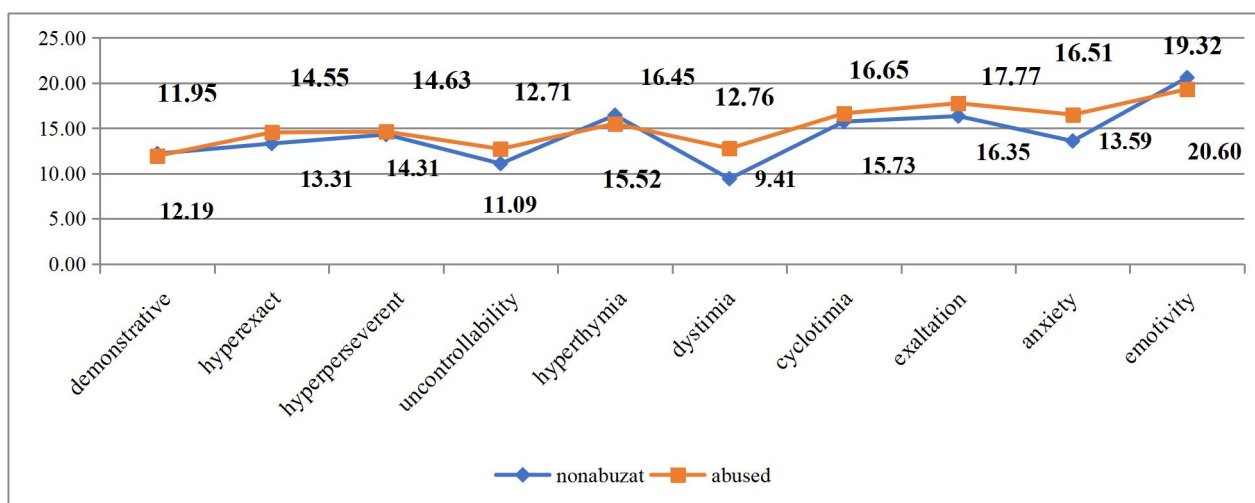


Fig. 3. Average values of personality traits in non-abused or abused women in childhood

Concerning the differences between the *personal resources* of women abused in childhood compared to those who were not abused, we can specify the following:

1. **The results of the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSS).** Self-esteem in women abused in childhood is lower: (M=27.14, SD=5.24) compared to the average value obtained by women who have not experienced abuse in childhood: (M=31.02, SD=4.57). There are statistically significant differences, with an index: $t_{171.853}=5.23$, at a materiality threshold: $p=0.0001$.

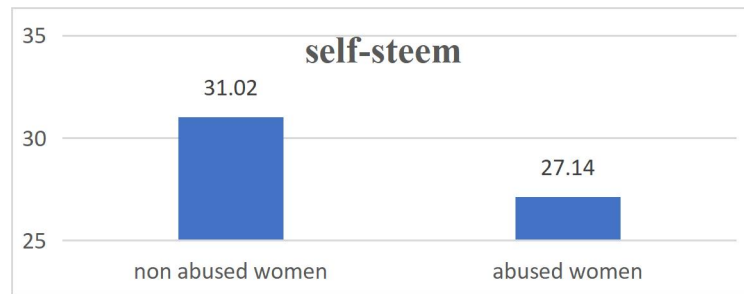


Fig. 4. Average values of self-esteem in abused or non-abused women as children

2. **According to the results obtained on the "Hostility Inventory",** women who were abused in childhood have higher mean values of hostility: (M = 35.73, SD = 7.81) than women who have not experienced abuse in childhood: (M = 30.78, SD = 9.90). The results obtained via the T-Student test demonstrate the existence of a statistically significant difference, with the index: $t_{173}=-3.695$, $p=0.0001$. Women subjected to maltreatment in childhood had higher coefficients concerning the following forms of hostility: *resentment, indirect hostility, assault, suspicion, irritability, verbal hostility*, and lower coefficients for negativism.

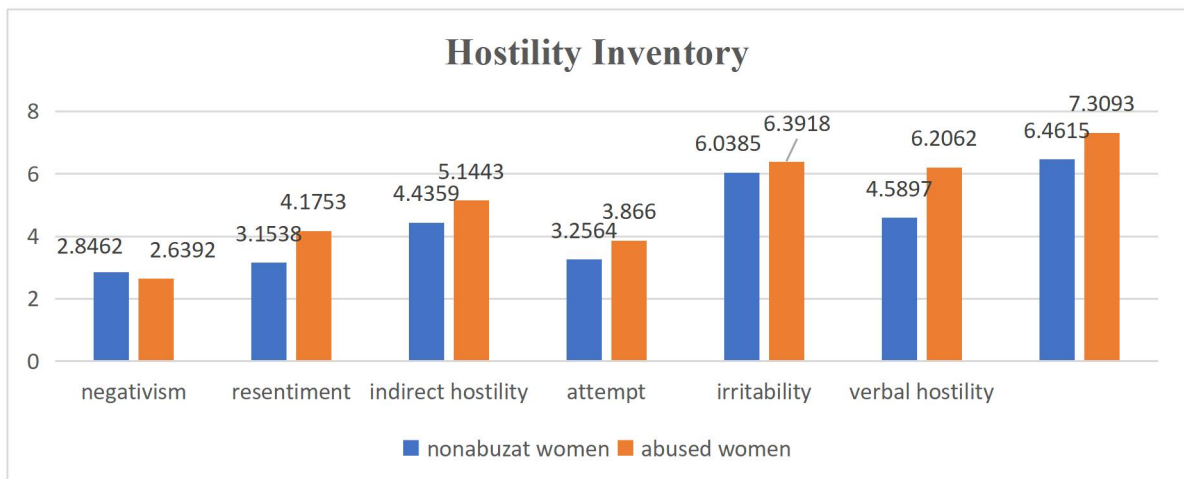


Fig. 5. Average values of hostility in abused or non-abused women in childhood

3. **According to the results of the "Resilience test":** resilience in women who have not experienced abuse in childhood has average values: (M=78.30, SD=13.53), compared to that of women who were abused in childhood: (M=68.65, SD=17.85). The comparative method via the T-Student test shows a statistically significant difference: $t_{172.442}=4.064$, at a materiality threshold: $p=0.0001$.

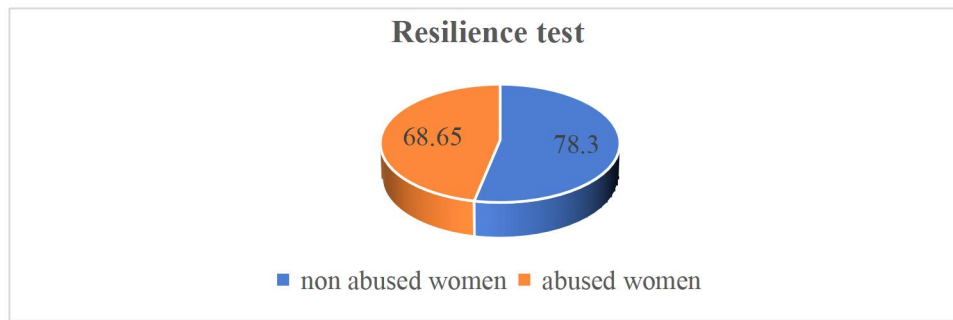


Fig. 6. Average values of resilience in abused or non-abused women as children

4. The results of the "Cognitive-emotional coping strategies - CERQ" concerning the women from the research group showed statistically significant differences in the scales: *self-blame* ($t_{173} = -2.22$, with a materiality threshold: $p \leq 0.028$), *positive refocusing*: ($t_{173} = 2.711$, at the materiality threshold: $p \leq 0.007$) *blaming others*: ($t_{150.512} = -3.336$, at the materiality threshold: $p \leq 0.001$).

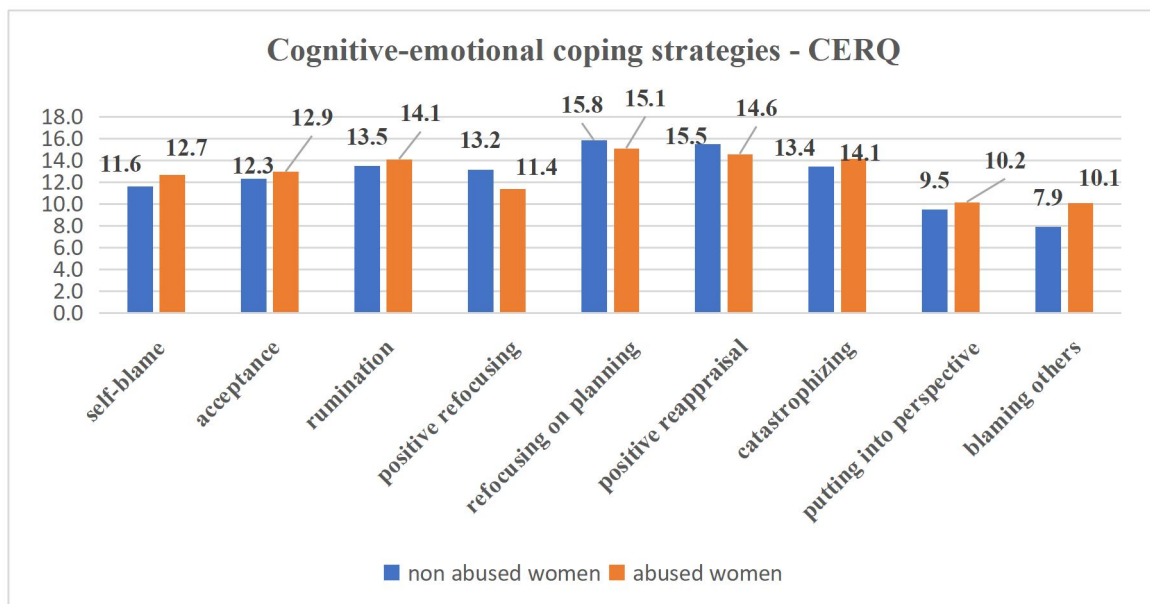


Fig. 7. The mean values of the cognitive-emotional coping scales in abused or not abused women as children

5. The results of „Behavioral Coping Strategies (SACS)” indicate statistically significant differences in two of the nine scales: *antisocial action* ($M = 14.29$, $SD = 4.56$) compared to women who have not experienced abuse in childhood: ($M = 13.04$, $SD = 3.72$), with the value of $t_{172.952} = -1.995$, $p \leq 0.048$) and *aggressive action* - women who have been abused in childhood ($M = 15.34$, $SD = 5.01$), in this case, the indicators are higher than those of non-abused women: ($M = 13.27$, $SD = 3.39$). Using the Student T-test, we were able to identify a statistically significant difference ($t_{168.446} = -3.244$, at a materiality threshold of $p = 0.001$).

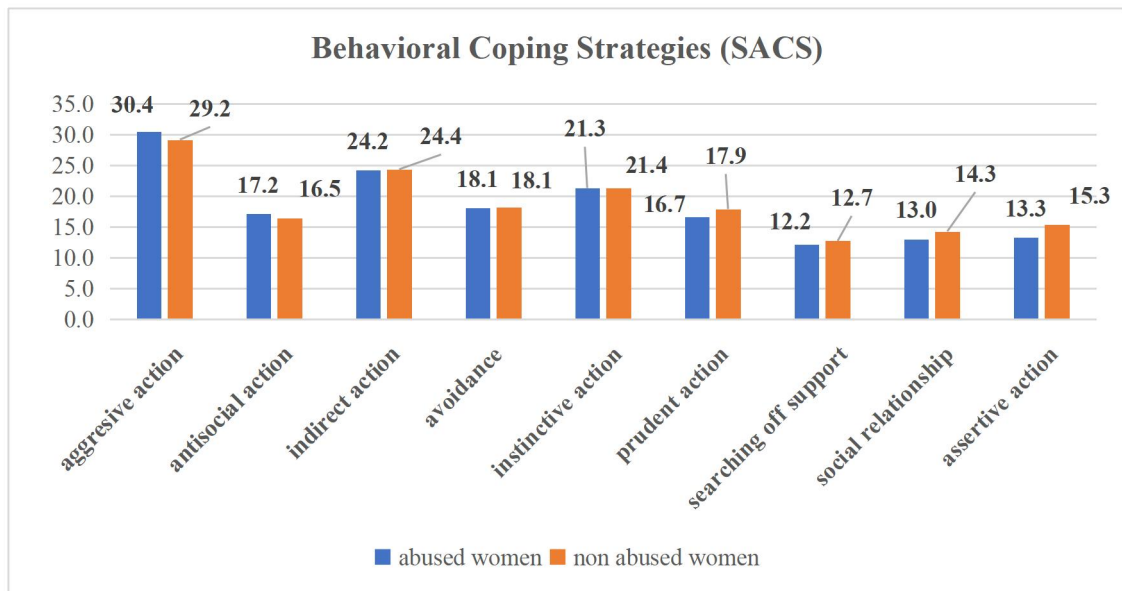


Fig. 8. Comparison of mean values on the SACS scales in abused or non-abused women as children

Analyzing the relationship between the type of attachment in women abused in childhood and their personal resources allowed us to find that there are indirectly proportional correlations between the secure attachment style and self-esteem ($r = -0.364$, $p = 0.009$), and inversely proportional correlations between secure attachment and forms of hostility: *irritability* ($r = -0.334$, $p = 0.021$), *suspicion* ($r = -0.322$, $p = 0.029$) and an inversely proportional association between secure attachment style and cognitive and emotional coping strategy: *blaming others* ($r = -0.334$, $p = 0.022$). At the same time, there are moderate indirect correlations concerning the type of anxious-ambivalent attachment, on several scales of coping strategies: indirect action scale ($r = -0.423$, $p = 0.001$), antisocial action scale ($r = -0.451$, $p = 0.001$), and aggressive action scale ($r = -0.374$, $p = 0.001$).

Chapter 3 – "Developing a sense of psychological safety by activating personal resources in women abused as children" explores the possibility of activating personal resources and methods of learning adaptive coping strategies regarding psychological security in women abused in childhood and highlights the effectiveness of the psychological intervention SACS program. There is an overview of the intervention's purpose, hypothesis, objectives, methods, and characteristics.

The **goal** of the study was focused on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the psychological intervention program - aimed at increasing psychological security by activating personal resources in women abused as children. **General objectives:** 1. Developing the feeling of psychological security in women who were abused in childhood, and were part of the experimental group; 2. Activating the personal resources of women abused in childhood, in order to improve the quality of their lives. The general objectives have been customized with **specific objectives** for the formative intervention stage: facilitating the acceptance of the reality of lived experiences and

decreasing the tendency to deny the existence of traumatic events; encouraging the expression of emotions and feelings and talking about their normality; providing support in the process of activating resources and adapting to change; evaluation of the effectiveness of the training program.

The experimental variables: *independent variable:* the psychological intervention program, and the *dependent variables:* 1. Strengthening psychological security by reactivating the personal resources of women who have experienced abuse in childhood; 2. Activating the personal resources of women abused in childhood in order to improve their quality of life: increasing the level of self-esteem and resilience, decreasing hostility and its forms of expression, and developing cognitive-emotional and adaptive behavioral coping strategies.

The **hypothesis** of the intervention approach: we consider that the feeling of psychological security can be developed in abused women through techniques that can activate and explore their internal resources, during a psychological intervention program.

The psychological recovery program was based on the multispectral studies of various schools and currents in the fields of general psychology, family psychology, psychology of age, and social psychology, taking into consideration the following **principles:** ensuring a secure framework, beneficence, a harmless attitude and a climate of trust, autonomy, creating the conditions for change, paying attention to one's own body, integration, and implementation.

30 women subjected to childhood abuse were included in the intervention program. They were divided into two groups: the *GE (experimental group)* and *GC (control group)*, of 15 women each. The homogeneity of the experimental and control groups was established by comparing the results obtained by the women that were part of the experimental group, at the test level.

The training program consisted of 24 sessions, that were held over six months, once a week. The duration of a session was 1.5 - 2 hours.

The intervention program was carried out by implementing several **techniques** (for developing the feeling of security, activation of internal resources, induction, etc.), which were selected according to the therapeutic guidelines. It involved several **stages:** developing a climate of trust and security, establishing relationships, collaborating and stimulating the feeling of security, activating resources, and strengthening and evaluating the effectiveness of the program as a whole.

In order to determine the homogeneity of the control group and the experimental group, we used the U Mann-Whitney method for each of the scales of the selected instruments. Also, we have performed an initial evaluation of the values of attachment and personal resources that were included in the GC and GE groups.

The assessment of the training program's effectiveness was carried out using the comparison of GE/test with GE/retest data. Significant statistical differences between the average values of the results obtained at the test and retest stages in the experimental group are direct evidence of the

activation of personal resources of women abused in childhood and the development of a sense of security compared to the stage before the program.

In this context, we will present the results obtained by the women abused in childhood from the experimental group, at the test and retest stage.

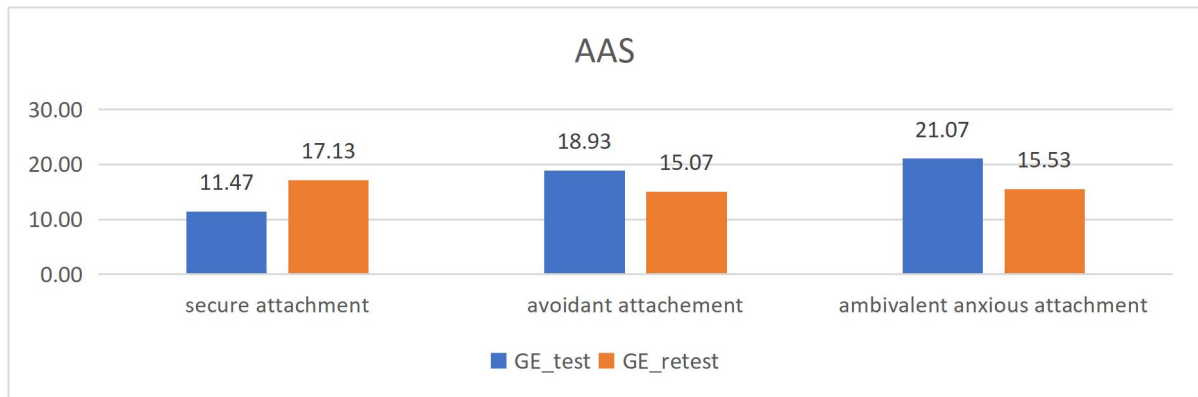


Fig. 9. Average values for the attachment variable, based on AAS, the GE test and GE/retest

The graphical representation of the mean values of the results obtained by GE/test and GE/retest on the attachment variables indicates differences between the means on *secure attachment* - GE/test: (M1=11,47; SD=3,22) and GE/retest: (M2=17,13; SD=2,79), *avoidant attachment*: GE/test (M1=18,93; SD=3,82) and GE/retest: (M2=15,07; SD=2.86) and *anxious-ambivalent attachment*: GE/test (M1=21.07; SD=3.21) and GE/retest: (M2=15.53; SD=2.41)

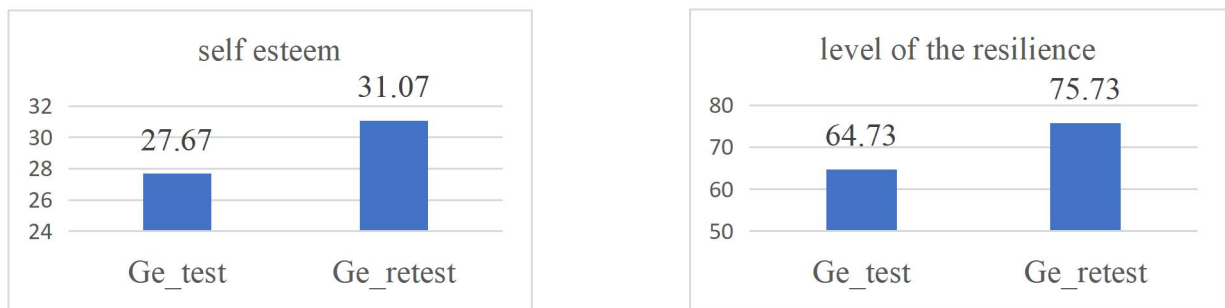
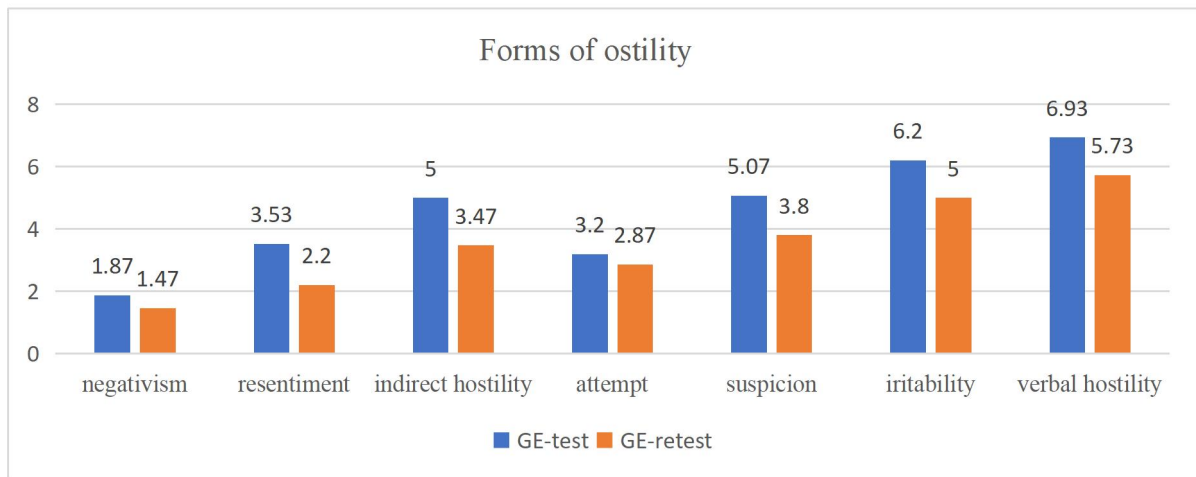


Fig. 10. Average values for the variables "self-esteem" and "resilience", in GE/test and GE/retest

The mean values for the "self-esteem" variable increased in the experimental group, at the retest stage, compared to the test stage - GE/test: (M1=27.67; SD=2.94) and GE/retest: (M2=31.07; SD=2.18), and the mean values for the "resilience" variable for GE/test: (M1=64.73; SD=11.44) and GE/retest: (M2=75.73; SD= 4.16) confirms a significant increase.

The statistical processing of the data revealed statistically significant differences in the following variables: *level of hostility*: (Z=-3.775, p≤0.0001), *resentment*: (Z=-2.246, p≤0.025), *indirect hostility*: (Z= -3.213, p≤0.001), *suspicion* (Z=-2.842, p≤0.004). For the variables: *negativism*: (Z=-1.186, p≤0.236), *irritability* (Z=-2.642, p≤0.008), *verbal hostility*: (Z=-2.687, p≤0.007) and *assault*: (Z=-0.731, p ≤0.465) there are no statistically significant differences.



Fi

g. 11. Average values of forms of hostility, GE/test and GE/retest, according to the hostility test

The comparison of test and retest results in the forms of the hostility, in GE and GC groups, revealed statistically significant differences in the following variables: level of *hostility*: ($Z=-3.775$, $p\leq 0.0001$), *resentment*: ($Z=-2.246$, $p\leq 0.025$), *indirect hostility*: ($Z=-3.213$, $p\leq 0.001$), *suspicion* ($Z=-2.842$, $p\leq 0.004$). For *negativism*: ($Z=-1.186$, $p\leq 0.236$), *irritability* ($Z=-2.642$, $p\leq 0.008$), *verbal hostility*: ($Z=-2.687$, $p\leq 0.007$) and *assault*: ($Z=-0.731$, $p\leq 0.465$) there are no statistically significant differences.

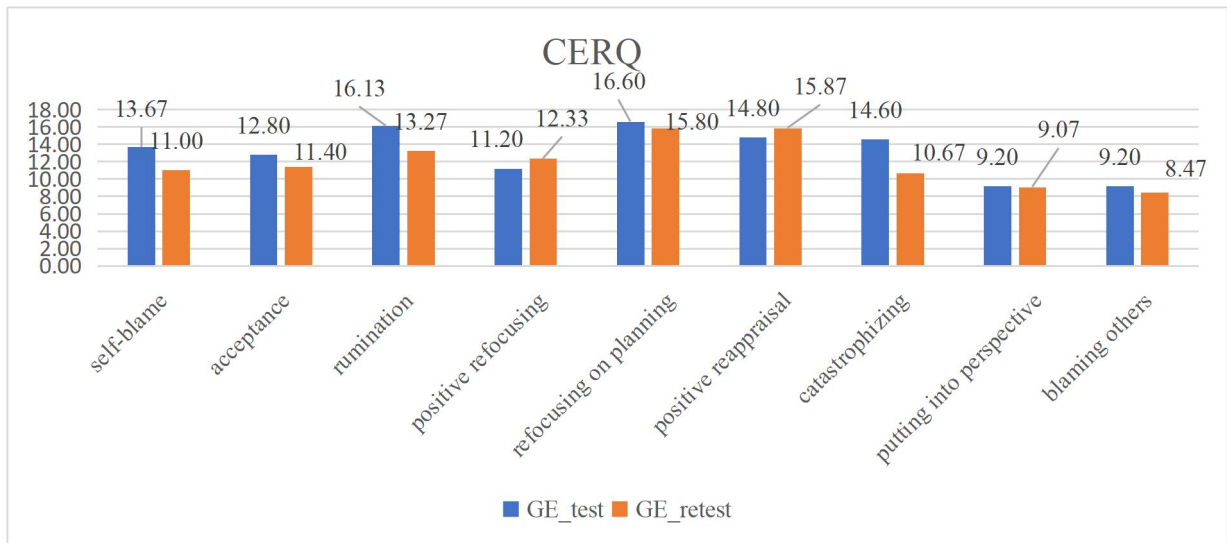


Fig. 11. Average values of cognitive-emotional coping strategies for GE/test and GE/retest according to CERQ

The comparison of the results offered us the possibility to identify differences in means due to psychological interventions in the formative experiment concerning the cognitive-emotional coping strategies between GE/test and GE/retest. We highlighted statistically significant differences in the following variables: *acceptance* ($Z = -1.966$, $p = 0.049$), *self-blame* ($Z = -2.587$, $p = 0.010$), *rumination* ($Z = -2.949$, $p = 0.003$), *positive refocusing* ($Z = -2.038$, $p\leq 0.042$), *positive reappraisal* ($Z = -2.214$, $p\leq 0.027$), *catastrophizing* ($Z = -3.179$, $p\leq 0.001$) and the lack of statistically significant differences in

the variables: *refocusing on planning* ($Z=-1.633$, $p\leq 0.102$), focusing on *perspective* ($Z=-0.297$, $p\leq 0.766$) and *blaming others* ($Z=-0.275$, $p\leq 0.783$).

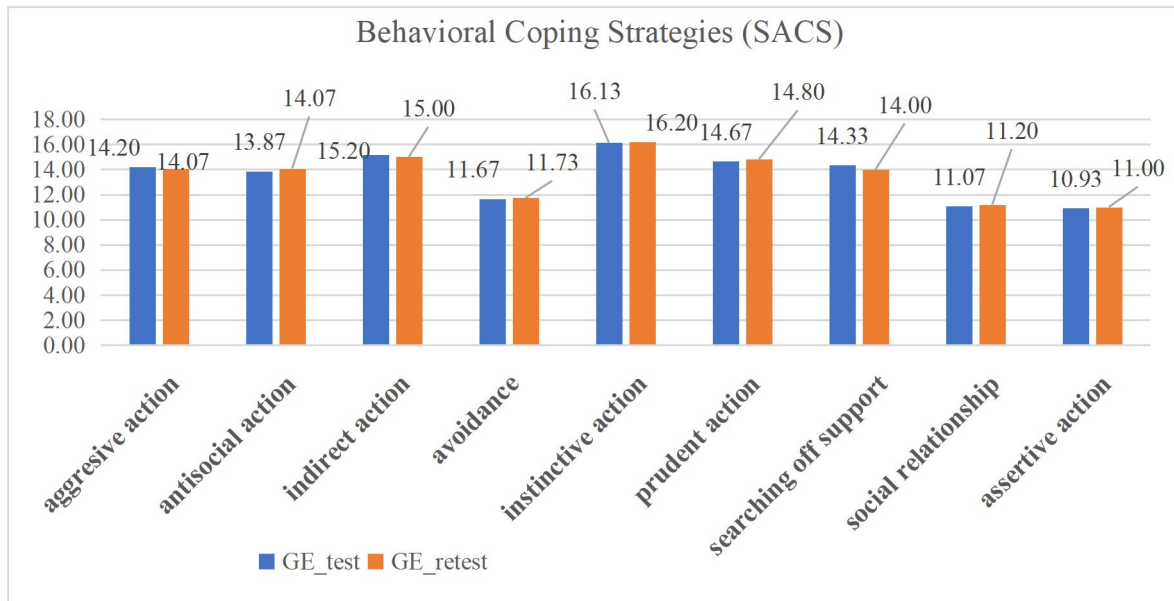


Fig. 12. Average values for behavioral coping strategies, GE/test, GE/retest, according to SACS

There are statistically significant differences in behavioral coping strategies in GE/test and GE/retest for the following variables: *assertive action* ($Z= -2.831$ $p\leq 0.005$), search for *social support* ($Z=-2.979$ $p\leq 0.003$), *prudent course of action* ($Z=-2.049$, $p\leq 0.040$), *indirect action* ($Z=-2.322$, $p\leq 0.020$), *aggressive action* ($Z= -2.940$, $p\leq 0.003$), and the lack of statistically significant data for the variables: *social relationship* ($Z =-1.881$, $p\leq 0.060$), *instinctive action* ($Z=-0.386$, $p\leq 0.699$), *avoidance* ($Z=-1.514$, $p\leq 0.130$) and *antisocial action* ($Z=-1.633$, $p\leq 0.102$).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarize the results obtained on the basis of the ascertainment and the formative experiment, as a result of implementing the psychological intervention program on strengthening the feeling of psychological security in women subjected to abuse in childhood and activating personal resources. Therefore, we have been able to present the following conclusions:

1. The psychological security of women who experienced abuse in childhood is a sociocultural phenomenon, requiring a multifactorial approach, in the context of the complexity of daily life, referring both to women, as individuals, and to society, as a whole. The need for security is vital, since childhood and has a particular impact on the child's personality development, with long-term repercussions, including in adulthood.

2. Child abuse is a serious and current issue in our modern society, with ramifications and consequences for the mental health of children, especially in the case of female victims, because of

its influence on their lives, and because, most of the time, the abuse detection and intervention are both delayed.

3. The study of scientific publications on the issue of personal resources highlighted great differences in their interpretation through the view of personal coping resources, internal, general resistance and psychosocial resources, personality potential, and mental resources. The activation of personal resources provides diverse adaptability and alternative approaches to overcome difficult existential situations caused by mistreatment and various forms of abuse, and it is critical in developing a sense of psychological security.

4. Women who have not been abused in childhood develop predominantly secure attachments, which are determined by their parent's ability to provide a secure, violence-free environment with a higher level of security, self-esteem, and resilience to stressful situations, and can positively refocus on lived experiences learning from reference people in their living environment.

5. Abuse in childhood influences the development of psychological insecurity, which can persist during adulthood. Abused women, regardless of the form of abuse they experienced in childhood, tend to experience a state of insecurity and avoid developing secure attachment relationships, showing predominantly anxious-ambivalent and avoidant attachment.

6. The impact of violent actions on children can have long-term consequences, and can influence their adult personality and cause some personality traits to become more prominent: reduced level of self-esteem and resilience, and a higher degree of hostility, a fact that makes them resort to more often to maladaptive cognitive-emotional coping strategies.

7. The presence of a correlation coefficient between forms of attachment and personal resources in women who experienced abuse in childhood indicates the possibility of activating personal resources in adulthood and strengthening the feeling of psychological security.

8. The formative psychological intervention aided in the strengthening of the secure attachment and the decrease of values concerning the avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachments in women who experienced abuse in childhood. As a result, there was an increase in self-esteem and resilience, as well as a decrease in hostility and the use of maladaptive coping strategies. Women refocus their attention away from traumatic memories and think about their new goals and expectations, new events and dreams, which will have a positive impact on the development of psychological security and activate personal resources.

Recommendations for the implementation of this program: 1) The materials presented can be used to develop undergraduate courses (license and master's degree), and professional training internships in the field: for psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers; 2) The psychological intervention program can represent a solid contribution for professionals in order to train security, recover victims of violence, and activate personal resources; 3. The results of this research, as well

as the theoretical and practical information, can be disseminated to the interested public (teachers, parents, and specialists) by publishing a guide of good practice.

Suggestions for future research: The thesis paves the way for new research: a comprehensive investigation of psychological security in children who have experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect, as well as their evaluation and rehabilitation through psychotherapy; a correlation study between parenting styles and psychological security; research on the transgenerational transmission of psychological security; and an analysis of psychological safety in the school environment.

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ADNOTARE

Natalia Rotaru-Sîrbu

Formarea sentimentului securității psihologice prin intermediul activării resurselor personale ale femeilor supuse abuzului în copilărie

Teză de doctor în psihologie,

Chișinău, 2022

Structura tezei: Prezenta cercetare cuprinde adnotările în limbile română, rusă și engleză, introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 277 de titluri, 44 figuri, 30 tabele, 3 anexe. Textul de bază cuprinde 164 de pagini. Rezultatele studiului au fost publicate în 10 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: securitate psihologică, atașament, violență, abuz, traumă, resurse personale, femei supuse abuzului.

Domeniul de studiu: Cercetarea se plasează la confluența unor domenii de cercetare precum psihologia socială, psihologia familiei și a victimei, psihologia vârstelor.

Scopul cercetării constă în studierea sentimentului securității psihologice la femeile supuse abuzului în copilărie, dar și al resurselor personale ca factori de impact asupra securității, elaborarea și implementarea programului pentru fortificarea sentimentului de securitate psihologică și activarea resurselor personale la femeile abuzate în copilărie.

Obiectivele cercetării: determinarea prezenței abuzului în copilărie și a tipurilor de abuz la care au fost supuse femeile în timpul copilăriei; studierea sentimentului securității psihologice la femeile abuzate și neabuzate în copilărie prin determinarea tipului de atașament; analizarea comparativă a tipului de atașament, în dependență de formele de abuz; stabilirea accentuărilor de personalitate și a resurselor personale (stimă de sine, reziliență, ostilitate, strategii de coping); elaborarea și implementarea programului pentru fortificarea sentimentului de securitate psihologică și activarea resurselor personale la femeile supuse abuzului în copilărie.

Rezultatele obținute care contribuie la soluționarea problemei științifice importante: determinarea specificului sentimentului securității la femeile abuzate și neabuzate în copilărie, al resurselor personale și al impactului implementării programului de intervenție psihologică prin fortificarea sentimentului securității și activarea resurselor personale la femeile abuzate.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică rezidă în faptul că pentru prima dată, la nivel național, au fost studiate consecințele abuzului (fizic, emoțional, neglijare și sexual) din copilărie la femeile adulte, trăsăturile de personalitate, nivelul stimei de sine, de reziliență și ostilitate, dar și capacitatea acestora de a-și reactiva resursele; totodată, contrastiv, a fost evaluată situația femeilor care nu au fost supuse violenței în copilărie și a fost elaborat și implementat un program de intervenție psihologică orientat spre antrenarea sentimentului securității și activarea resurselor personale.

Semnificația teoretică a lucrării: reprezintă un studiu pluridisciplinar, care a contribuit la clarificarea cadrului teoretic privind termenul de securitate psihologică și factorii care îl determină, evidențiind că situațiile de abuz în copilărie au un impact puternic asupra formării personalității și influențează calitatea vieții în perioada adultă atât în cadrul familiei, cât și în afara ei.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării constă în faptul că rezultatele obținute servesc drept bază pentru elaborarea unui ghid de bune practici, prin dezvoltarea, implementarea și validarea programului de intervenție psihologică pentru încurajarea exprimării sentimentelor, facilitarea acceptării experiențelor trăite și susținerea femeilor abuzate în copilărie în procesul de activare a resurselor pentru adaptarea la schimbare.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice. Rezultatele acestui studiu sunt utilizate în procesul de pregătire și formare a viitorilor psihologi și profesori, reprezentând un reper la elaborarea altor cercetări. Totodată, rezultatele au fost discutate în articole și comunicări științifice la nivel național și internațional. Teza reprezintă o contribuție temeinică la îmbogățirea literaturii științifice naționale, iar datele obținute pot fi utilizate la elaborarea unor politici sociale privind violența în familie.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Наталья Ротару-Сырбу

Формирование чувства психологической безопасности при активации личных ресурсов у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве

Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата психологических наук, Кишинэу, 2022

Структура диссертации. Диссертация состоит из аннотаций на румынском, английском и русском языках; списка сокращений; введения; трех глав, общих выводов и рекомендаций; библиографии 277; 45 рисунков; 34 таблиц и 3 приложений. Основной текст диссертации изложен на 163 страницах. Результаты были опубликованы в 10 научных статьях.

Ключевые слова: психологическая безопасность, привязанность, насилие, жестокое обращение, травма, личные ресурсы, женщины – жертвы насилия.

Областью исследования настоящей работы является: социальная психология, психология развития, возрастная психология, изучение психосоциальных навыков, отцовской идентичности и психосоциальной адаптации.

Цель работы заключается в изучении чувства психологической безопасности и личных ресурсов у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве.

Задачи исследования: определение наличия и видов жестокого обращения с женщинами, подвергшихся насилию в детстве; изучение чувства психологической безопасности у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве и у тех которые не стали жертвами насилия в детстве, путем детерминации типа привязанности; сравнительный анализ типа привязанности в зависимости от формы жестокого обращения; установление акцентуаций личности у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве; определение уровня самооценки у этих женщин, по сравнению с теми, кто не подвергались насилию; определение враждебности, жизнестойкости у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве; оценка стратегий выживания часто используемых экспериментальными субъектами.

Научная новизна и оригинальность: впервые на национальном уровне мы исследовали последствия у женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве, их личностные качества, самооценку, и враждебность, а также их способность повторно активировать свои ресурсы; на основе сравнительного анализа, мы оценили ситуацию женщин, не подвергавшихся насилию в детстве и тех которые подвергались детскому насилию; разработали и внедрили программу психологического вмешательства, направленную на формирование чувства защищенности и активизацию личных ресурсов.

Важная решенная научная проблема: посредством анализа чувства безопасности у подвергшихся насилию и не подвергшихся насилию женщин в детстве было установлено, что подвергшиеся насилию женщины в детстве могут повторно активировать свои личные ресурсы, путем обоснования и реализации программы психологического вмешательства.

Теоретическая значимость работы: представляет междисциплинарную работу, аспекты из социальной интегративной и семейной психологии, психотерапии, психологии отношений, арт-терапии, эмпирической психологии, когнитивно-поведенческой психотерапии, групповой психотерапии, психотерапии тревожных расстройств.

Практическое значение работы заключается в применении предложенного практического руководства по разработке и внедрению программы психологического вмешательства и реализации программы психологической интервенции для поддержки женщин, подвергшихся насилию в детстве и для активации собственных ресурсов.

Внедрение результатов исследований. Результаты могут быть использованы в процессе обучения и подготовки психологов и послужат отправной точкой для разработки курсовых и магистерских диссертаций. А также, эти результаты были представлены на национальных и международных конференциях, а полученные данные могут быть использованы для разработки социальной политики по вопросам домашнего насилия.

ANNOTATION

Natalia Rotaru-Sîrbu

**The development of the psychological security sense by activating the personal resources of women
abused in childhood
PhD Thesis in Psychology,
Chisinau, 2022**

Structure of Dissertation: The present research includes annotations in Romanian, English and Russian; the list of abbreviations; Introduction; three chapters; General Conclusions and Recommendations; Bibliography 277; 44 figures; 30 tables and 3 appendices. The main text contains 164 pages. The obtained results were published in 10 scientific articles.

Key words: psychological security, attachment, violence, abuse, trauma, personal resources.

Area of study: the research is at the confluence of certain research domains, such social psychology, developmental psychology, age psychology, the study of psychosocial skills, paternal identity and psychosocial adaptation.

Purpose of the thesis: consists in analyzing the sense of psychological security and personal resources in women abused in childhood, battered women.

Objectives: identifying the presence of childhood abuse and the types of abuse to which women were subjected during their childhood; studying the sense of the psychological security in abused and non-abused women in childhood by determining the type of attachment; and making an contrastive analysis of the type of attachment, taking into consideration the forms of abuse; personality characteristics in women abused in childhood; identifying the level of self-esteem in women abused in childhood in comparison to those who were not abused; determining the level of hostility in women included in the research; establishing the level of the resilience in abused and non-abused women in childhood; assessment of coping strategies - frequently used by experimental subjects.

Scientific novelty and originality consist in the fact that for the first time, at the national level, were investigated the consequences of the childhood abuse, the personality traits of the women who were abused in childhood, their level of the self-esteem, resilience and hostility and the ability to reactivate their personal resources. At the same time, the situation of women who were not subjected to violence in childhood was assessed.

The important scientific problem solved. Due to the analyzing the sense of psychological security in abused and non-abused women in childhood, it was established that abused women in childhood can reactivate their personal resources, including by substantiating and implementing a psychological intervention program.

The theoretical significance of the study stems from the relevance of the researched subject. The PhD thesis represents a multidisciplinary work which combines the aspects of social psychology, family and couple psychology and psychotherapy, relationship psychology, integrative psychology, art therapy, humanistic-experiential psychology, cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, anxiety psychotherapy. We consider that the thesis contributed with new researches to the area of study concerning the terms of psychological security and personal resources, highlighting that the childhood abuse has a strong impact on the development of accentuated personality traits that influence the quality of adult's life within and outside the family.

The applied value of the research consists in the possibility to draw up a guide of good practice and a complex program of psycho-pedagogical intervention in the activity of psychologists, practitioners, counselors, teachers by implementing the psychological intervention program in order to encourage and facilitate the acceptance of past experiences and support women which were abused in childhood in the process of activating their resources.

Implementation of the research results. The results of this study are used in training and professional education of psychologists, teachers and will serve as a reference point in the process of developing other researches. This thesis represents a solid contribution to the enrichment of the national scientific literature, and the data obtained could be used in order to develop the social policies concerning domestic violence.

ROTARU-SÎRBU NATALIA

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY SENSE BY
ACTIVATING THE PERSONAL RESOURCES OF WOMEN ABUSED IN CHILDHOOD**

511.02 Speciality – Development psychology and educational psychology

Abstract of PhD Thesis in Psychology

Approved for printing:

Paper size 60x84 1/16

Offset paper. Offset pattern.

Circulation: 35 ex.

Sheet pattern: 1,5

Order nr. 49

Printing House of the „Ion Creangă” SPU, Chişinău, str. Ion Creangă, nr. 1, MD-2069