

Experiential Applications in the Aggressiveness – Frustration Dynamics in Teenagers –

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescence is a period of “crisis” determined by the rupture from the childhood age, which implies a series of freedom limitations that are often felt by young people as a frustration, an attempt on his natural rights to manifest as a personality.

Objectives: First of all, the paper aims to capture the relationship between aggressiveness and frustration during adolescence by: revealing the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation between the level of aggressiveness and the level of resistance to frustration among teenagers; emphasizing the existence of differences regarding the level of aggressiveness and the level of resistance to frustration according to the subjects’ age and gender; determining some correlations between the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration and the introvert/extravert polarity. Second of all, we aim to highlight the effects of some experiential work techniques in reducing the level of aggressiveness and frustration among teenagers.

Method: We used the following instruments: Eysenck Personality Inventory, organized on three scales: Extraversion, Neuroticism and Lie Scale, E.P.Q. Personality Questionnaire, which analyses essential personality dimensions on 5 scales, S. Rosenzweig’s frustration test and The experiential work program, containing a number of 5 sessions, within which we developed a series of expressive, creative and optimizing activities.

Results: The results allow us to state that, generally, the subjects did not present a motivation towards dissimulation. Also, a correlation between aggressiveness and the high scores in extraversion and neuroticism was noticed.

Conclusions: We can assert that there were positive and statistically significant correlations between the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration degree and the personality dominant (introvert/extravert).

Keywords: adolescence, crisis, aggressiveness, frustration, identity, process

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I. Introduction

Metaphorically considered “the golden age”, or, on the contrary, “the ingrate age”, adolescence rightfully remains what J.J. Rousseau called “the second birth” or “the mirror age, the age at which the teenager seeks to coincide with himself” (Golu, P., 1994, p. 159). As described in specialized literature, the adolescence “crisis” consists in multiple internal and external conflicts, impulsive acts or deflective conducts, expressed through hostility towards parents, rejection of cultural models or norms produced by adults and affirmation of some disputed conduct models (Grace, C., 1989).

Aggressiveness is one of the important manifestations of the actions and facts that influence the interaction between people and the efficiency of individual development. The aggressive conduct leads to the occurrence of inter-human conflicts and to non-constructive ways of solving them. Studies show an increase in the incidence of aggressive acts among teenagers and their equalization from the gender point of view (Burquest, 1981, apud Craig, G., 1989).

Theoretical framework

General characterization of adolescence

Every period of life brings along a series of challenges and difficulties that imply the development of new abilities and response manners. Many psychologists think there are two major issues the teenager is dealing with: obtaining a degree of independence and autonomy from their own parents and shaping their identity, creating a cohesive and harmonious ego that would blend different personality polarities (Craig, G., 1989).

When approaching adolescence, some specialized authors name it “golden age”, “ingrate age”, “the age of great enthusiasms”, “the age of social integration” or “the age of crises, anxieties, uncertainty, dissatisfaction”, due to the fact that it is a complex stage in the evolution of the individual, with special dynamics on psychic and physical level, which occupies a special position in the system of the individual’s evolutionary stages (Golu, F., 2010).

Adolescence implies transformations from the physical, psychical and social point of view. These changes generate disorders in the physical development, difficulties in the social development process, conflicts between aspirations and possibilities, between needs and the manner in which they are satisfied, between reality and ideal world (Craig, G., 1986).

The concept of autonomy includes the continuous influence that parents have both before and after adolescence and its achievement is a continuous process (Hill, 1987, apud Craig, G., 1989).

Adolescence also implies a restructuring and an evolution of the needs. The teenager’s need to be a personality translates into his desire for originality. (Șchiopu, U., Verza, E., 1981). An evolution of the need for self-affirmation, self-achievement and finding one’s own identity is recorded. In this context, becoming an adult implies a gradual transformation. More than anything, it requires both the ability to be independent and the quality to be interdependent, to relate to others in an assertive and pro-social manner. Independence represents the capacity to make judgments for oneself, to evaluate the external world according to one’s own standards, to “think for oneself”, as it is commonly said. On the other hand, interdependence represents that manner of relating in which there is a mutual dependence, as a symbolic exchange (Gilligan, C., 1987, apud Craig, G., 1989).

The identity shaping is also an area of great tension in which aggressiveness during adolescence is rooted. If up until this development stage, the individual defines his identity by relating to family (he is the son/daughter...), religion, school, different formal organizations, teams etc., from now on the identity will be shaped by firstly relating to oneself, to one’s own system of values and aspirations. The reference group is very important in this process and it often consists of somehow similar individuals from the ethnical, religious, national etc. point of view or in attitudes, ideals and life philosophy. According to Erik Erikson, the identity formation is an extremely complex process. It implies the integration of some behaviors and conducts, as well as some axiological coordinates in different spheres from the individual’s life. The process of identity formation implies the synthesis between the identification and the roles from childhood, somehow prescribed by the family, personal propensities, talent and the expectations of society. Identity will be constituted in the human psychic life as a protection shield against the events presumed to produce discontinuity in the individual’s evolution such as disease, different kinds of loses or dramatic changes in the social environment. However, above this protection mechanism, identity will be constituted as a program meant to confer the future directions of the individual’s evolution (Erikson, E., 1980).

In the field of emotions, a general amplification of the emotions complexity and intensity, including their enculturation and refinement, takes place and it is related to the increase of the social experience (Leve, R.M., 1990). Self-consciousness develops together with the feeling of independence, honor, dignity, the defense tendency and their expression. There also appears the

feeling of disagreement and restlessness related to behavior, surrounding persons and acquaintances (Birch, A., 1997). Anxiety is one of the most powerful emotions that the teenagers have. It is an exponential element of the battle between contradictory values and between the choices teenagers have to make (Archer, R.P., 1995, apud Craig, G., 1989).

The system of values and the development of morality are also two processes directly connected to the manifestation of aggressiveness. Forming a set of values designed to guide the evolution of the individual is a desirable characteristic of adolescence. The development of consciousness and axiological system is a process that begins with early socialization, when the child is told not to pull the others by the hair, not to lie, not to steal etc. In addition, the formation of behaviors through social learning, especially by following the parental model or through the punishment-reward dynamics, is strongly related to the manifestation of moral behavior. The endorsement of this type of development makes the teenagers easily recognize the value of community activities and show care towards others (Hoffman, L.W., 1980, apud Craig, G.).

The teenager consolidates his personality through the increased interest towards discovering his own person, through his inconstant behavior, powerful inner tensions and through the desire of differentiating himself from the others. The teenager analyses himself very much, he is in a continuous self-pursuit, self-discovery and self-valuing and the question "who am I?" is his characteristic (Lerner, R.M., Steinberg, L., 2004).

Aspects of aggressiveness in adolescence

Aggressiveness has constituted a preoccupation for the human development ever since ancient times. This preoccupation is due to an empirical observation of great impact: aggressiveness influences life quality of the individuals from a society (Stemate, R.E., 2010).

Aggressiveness can be defined as "the behavior characterized by brutal, destructive, attack reactions, manifested through affective reactions (intimidating the others), verbal reactions (insults, threatening words), physical reactions (hitting, injuring, fights)" (Mitrofan, N., Zdrenghea, V., Butoi T., 2000).

If we look at the recent history of humanity, aggressiveness seems to be an omnipresent conduct. From the stories inside the history books that describe atrocious battles to the sacred stories of the Bible or Koran and to the movies so much appreciated by the wide audience such as "Die Hard", "Schindler's List", "Saving Private Ryan" and the animation movies, everything seems impregnated with violence. Despite

the psychologists' suggestions to reduce the violent media content, they are more and more amplified. If we open any newspaper or turn on the television at any time, we will notice an intensification of the violent content broadcasting.

In 1999, the American Senate Committee on children and media violence presented, to the attention of parents and those building up social politics, a report, which revealed the fact that, by the age of 18, a youngster would have witnessed 200.000 scenes of simulated violence and 16.000 murders! (Greenhaven, 2004, apud Trend, D., 2007). The numbers regarding the receivables coming from selling materials with violent content are shattering: over 31 billion dollars spent on violent action-oriented games and 14 billion dollars spent on this type of movies! (Media Awareness Network, 2006, apud Trend, D., 2007). May all these be a cause for the psychopathology amplification and diversification from earlier and earlier ages? And if so, what would the solutions for countering these harmful effects be? In our country, the number of anti-social acts has increased, especially among minors and youngsters, who very easily endorse the aggressive models promoted by mass media. The systematic view of some aggressive models and violent scenes has repercussions on the behavior and leads to an emotional desensitization, to the reduction and total extinction of an empathic attitude and eventually the individuals get used to such an image. Repetition will lead to the acceptance of the phenomenon as normality. Experimental studies showed that the frequent view of some television programs and movies full of aggressiveness affects the cognitive processes, which are, in turn, responsible for our actions.

Nowadays, the most encountered types of students' aggressive conducts in school environment are violence and vandalism. If three decades ago, they were considered dysfunctional phenomena, today they are perceived as normal and functional, having the role to signal a series of situations that must generate adequate educational interventions. They can show that certain rules by which the teacher had guided before are no longer adequate, they no longer work and thus they must be modified and adapted to the current requirements. Moreover, either these phenomena mean a protest against some unpleasant measures imposed by the teacher, or they express the need for recognition and attention on behalf of others (Baron, R.A., Branscombe, N.R., Byrne, D., 2009). Each time the student-teacher relationship is frustrating, the student has a negative self-image and the chances for a vandal-type relationship are very high. The student tries to

attack the symbols that represent the school authority: teacher's desk, didactic material, thus trying to reestablish the emotional balance.

In order to explain such situations, Dollard approached the theory of "the escaping goat", in which he tried to show that if the psychic energy directed towards the achievement of a goal is inhibited, a state of frustration or "instigation to aggression", that aims to suppress the cause of frustration, is generated. If aggression cannot be directed towards the frustrating agent, then the aggression will be shifted towards other targets, which play the part of the "escaping goat". (Dollard, J.M., Neal, E.D., Leonard, W.M., Sears, O.H., Robert, R., 1939). These authors considered aggression to be exclusively the result of frustration, defined as an impediment to the achievement of a goal. The question that derives from a critical analysis of this theory is: where does the aggressive impulse start from? From the external frustrating environment or from an inner drive produced by the human psychic system? (Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D., O'Connor, C., 1987).

The frustration on behalf of the teacher, directed towards the student is most of the times generated by the grade and the students' reactions regarding the frustration through the grade are different, depending on age. Any negative consideration is associated with a negative affective emotion, which can rebound upon the student's attitude towards the teacher and, of course, towards the subject he teaches. By manifesting an authoritarian behavior, the teacher will aggress the student and he will generate aggressive reactions among his students, thus becoming a frustrating target. The lack of the capacity to communicate coherently, intelligibly and empathically the information makes the teacher unattractive and tiring and the way in which the message is spread, as well as the presentation manner can stir reactions of disgust and disinterest on behalf of the student. The student can interpret all these as hostile manifestations, as a revenge coming from the teacher.

School violence is a social drama, given the effects it generates. The victims are visibly affected psychologically, sometimes for their entire life. They remain with deep marks, feelings of shame, guilt, devaluing. Their capacity for self-control, their autonomy, self-confidence and the trust in others decrease. Indirectly, the refusal of social contact and communication can be considered aggressiveness as well. The resentment conduct occurs when the young man does not wish to obey to some rules, the bravado being the cause for indiscipline. Running away from home, skipping school, obscene language and inappropriate outfit are meant to draw the attention and raise a question mark.

The psychosocial approach shows that the role of social learning is predominant in the field of behaviors. A. Bandura's experiments (1963) show how important the role of the adult as a model is when it comes to children learning the aggressive behavior – by copying it. As R.A. Baron and D. Byrne showed, if aggressiveness is, first of all, learned, it can be directly controlled much more easily, both on a social level as well as on an individual one (Baron, R.A., Branscombe, N.R., Byrne, D., 2009).

Aggressive behaviors are motivationally induced by creating a state of anger and fury. Aggressiveness is a frequently encountered phenomenon in children or adults' life situations, whether they are victims or witnesses of the phenomenon. There are permanent or periodic aggressions that take the shape of arguments, vandalism acts or simple mediatized images. Stories, information broadcasted by television, newspapers, magazines (crime, rapes, robberies, wars and computer games) – all these incite to an aggressive behavior.

In recent years, we have been witnessing a more and more visible preoccupation of the political leaders and of the social psychology. We can even talk about an important leap for the conception and intervention concerning this phenomenon. A holistic approach, an approach that can lead to knowledge and intervention must not only take into consideration the theory of learning violent conducts through mass-media, but also the social and economic context, the axiological and political systems in which the individuals function, as well as other factors that can encourage the manifestation of the conducts exposed by mass-media.

However, not any type of aggressiveness represents an anti-social behavior. Not any anti-social act implies aggressiveness. Unintentional aggressiveness is not anti-social (Baron, R.A., Branscombe, N.R., Byrne, D., 2009). In almost every act of violence, both factors of biological, psychological and psychosocial nature, as well as instinctive references (spontaneous-emotional) and behavioral models acquired through learning are involved.

Another source of institutional violence is the relationship of power between the teacher and the student, which generates animosities that result in nervousness and stress. In school, the inversely proportional ratio between teachers' expectations and their authoritarian style on the one hand and the students' desires on the other hand, generates frustration. Teachers are afraid not to lose their authority and implicitly the respect the students owe them (Golu, F., 2010). However, this risk would not exist if the teacher empathized with the students and tried to identify himself with them. Students wish to be taken into

consideration based on their interests, aspirations and the characteristics of their personalities and the teachers only wish to value the school success variable. Students wish for understanding, close, open to dialogue teachers and teachers wish for quiet and conformist students.

Moreover, the competition between students generates feelings of conflict and rivalry, which leads to self-devaluing in the case of those who fail in school. It leads to labeling, marginalization, exclusion, all of which are forms of institutionalized violence.

A positive climate in the school environment not only leads to developing the intellectual capacities, but also to forming some affective, psycho-moral behaviors and self-image. In children and young people, the aggressiveness manifestation is different: for some of them, the aggressive tendencies occur early (4-9 years old) and there is a high possibility for this behavior to continue at adult ages, while for others aggressiveness occurs in adolescence, which is characteristic for this stage and it disappears once this life stage is passed through.

Another type of aggressiveness often encountered in schools is the one resulted from the misunderstanding of what power and authority mean. The abusive use of power and authority in order to humiliate, blame and punish the obedient ones is a form of aggressiveness. In adolescence, groups that have different initiation rituals are formed, through which a member passes from one stage to another, from childhood to the first youth. Most of the times, the ritual includes the demonstration of some negative qualities, expressed through acts of violence. A teenager's friendships and popularity are also a possible source of conflict and there are not any studies to confirm a positive correlation between empathy and popularity (Hartup, A., 1970, apud Mitrofan, L., 2004).

According to Johns, B.H., Crowley, E.P., & Guetzole, E., aggressiveness is not generated by a single cause. It is the result of some complex interactions between physiological and psychological in different circumstances: brain disorders, metabolic disorders, alterations of the central nervous system, free access to weapons, exposure to violence etc. (Johns, B.H., Crowley, E.P., & Guetzole, E., 2002).

In the experiential approach, aggressiveness is considered a form of human experience, which can be integrated in all the three dimensions of existence: personal, interpersonal and transpersonal, if regarded in a holistic manner. According to the Unifying Experiential Psychotherapy, aggressiveness can be regarded as a resource, an energy supply, used for adaption and survival, rather than a personal flaw or an

undesirable characteristic. This energy contains a potential of re-signification, transformation into a manner of positive expression. In other words, aggressive behavior can be transformed into a focus on power, effort, courage and firmness (Mitrofan, I., 2004, p. 140).

Frustration

The connection between frustration (defined as the impossibility to satisfy a need or to manifest a behavior) and aggressiveness has constituted a widely debated subject in psychology for over half a century. It has also constituted the explanation for some social group dynamics and individual manifestations. According to J. Laplanche and J.P. Pontalis (1994), frustration is defined as the condition of the subject who is refused or refuses himself the satisfaction of a driving requirement. Therefore, frustration appears as a situation that opposes to the fulfillment of a motivated behavior, due to the absence of the object necessary for its satisfaction or due to the existence of an obstacle between the person and the object.

This explanation regarding the cause of violence is considered primordial, fundamental in discovering the causes of violence. The basic premise from which theory starts is that frustration always and inevitably leads to aggressiveness, which is exclusively the result of frustration. Although, we can obviously notice social proofs for this theory throughout history (rebellions against the oppressors, revolutions and many other manifestations of the masses, as well as individual conducts), the experiments conducted in this field show that frustration does not always and necessary lead to aggression. It can be directed and sublimed through different other means. Moreover, the experiments regarding problem solving and the addicted type behaviors brought into discussion the fact that aggressive behavior could occur in the absence of frustration as well. Leonard Berkowitz postulates the theory according to which aggressiveness would only occur as a result of an "aversive" type of frustration, thus taking a step forward into the conceptual delimitation between aggressiveness as a complex behavior and the simple manifestation of fury. Although there is contradictory information in the subsequently conducted replication studies, we can conclude that the aversive stimuli are more prone to favor and not clearly determine an aggressive behavior (Berkowitz, L., apud Gatej, E.R., 2010).

Aggressiveness is a reaction specific to frustration and can be oriented towards the object or, by switching towards any other object. Those who support this statement start from the belief that aggressiveness is

determined by external conditions. In this regard, the most popular is the frustration-aggressiveness theory, formulated by John Dollard and other colleagues at Yale University. The two postulates: “aggressiveness is always a consequence of frustration” and “frustration always leads to a certain form of aggressiveness” appear on the very first page of their work called “Frustration and Aggressiveness” (Dollard, J.M., Neal, E.D., Leonard, W.M., Sears, O.H., Robert, R., 1939).

The regression to inferior behaviors, depression and abandonment reactions, as well as the compensation processes correlated with the tendency to overcome difficulties and obtaining performances in the frustrating domain or in another are also reactions specific to frustration.

II. Research objectives and hypotheses

Research objectives

1. To reveal the existence of a statistically positive and significant correlation between the aggressiveness level and the level of resistance to frustration among teenagers.
2. To highlight the existence of some differences regarding the level of aggressiveness and resistance to frustration depending on the subjects' age.
3. To highlight the existence of some differences regarding the level of aggressiveness and resistance to frustration depending on the subjects' gender.
4. To determine some correlations between the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration and the introvert/extravert polarity.
5. To highlight the effects of the experiential work techniques in reducing frustration and aggressiveness.

Research hypotheses

1. There is a positive and significant correlation between the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration.
2. There are significant differences regarding both the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration depending on the subjects' age.
3. The subjects' gender will determine significant differences regarding the level of aggressiveness and resistance to frustration.
4. There are statistically positive and significant correlations between the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration and the personality dominant (introvert/extravert).

5. The involvement of the subjects in an experiential work program determines the decrease of the aggressiveness and frustration level.

Research variables

Independent variables:

- Introvert/extravert polarity;
- Age of the subjects;
- Gender of the subjects;

Dependent variables:

- Aggressiveness;
- Resistance to frustration.

Participants

The sample of investigated subjects in conducting this research consists of 110 subjects, 54 girls and 56 boys aged 15-19, coming from 5 educational profiles and three high-schools in Bucharest. The subjects were divided into three age categories: 15-16 years old, 17-18 years old and 19 years old.

III. Methods and instruments

In order to achieve the objectives and verify the hypotheses, we used the following instruments:

- *Eysenck Personality Inventory* (E.P.I.) organized on three scales: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N) and Lie Scale (L).
- *E.P.Q. Personality Questionnaire*, which analyses essential personality dimensions on 5 scales: **L** – lie; **E** – extraversion-introversion; **C** – conduct disorders; **N** – neuroticism; **P** – psychoticism.
- *S. Rosenzweig's frustration test* (*Picture Association Study for Assessing Reactions to Frustration / Picture Frustration Study / P- F Test*).
- *The experiential work program* contained a number of 5 sessions, within which we developed a series of expressive, creative and optimizing activities. We made 3 groups for each high-school, 9 work-groups overall, each of them containing 11-13 participants.

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (E.P.I.) measures two personality dimensions, independent from each other: extraversion-introversion (E) and neuroticism-stability (N). The two dimensions are measured through Yes or No answers, given for 24 questions for each dimension. The questions were selected by analyzing the items and through factorial analysis. Moreover, the questionnaire contains a sincerity scale, in order to detect the potential falsification attempts (L). There are two parallel tests (A and B) for the cases in which retesting the subjects is necessary, each form containing 57 questions.

The EPQ version adapted to Romanian population contains 79 items divided in 5 scales: **L** – lie; **E** – extraversion – introversion; **C** – conduct (behavioral) disorders; **N** – neuroticism; **P** – psychoticism.

E.P.Q (Personality Questionnaire) includes a special additional scale – psychoticism. Psychoticism is the most complex dimension. It is described as the interaction between the tendencies towards aggressiveness, egocentrism, antisocial behavior and the lack of empathy. If the trait is highly present, then the behavior is marked by the occurrence of the tendency to cause disorders, by solitude, cruelty, hostility towards the other, preferences for strange and uncanny things with antisocial nature. On the other way around, there are socialized persons, with the tendency to pay great respect to social rules, conventions and others' rights, who have well-adjusted to reality aspirational levels (Minulescu, M., 1996)

Rosenzweig Test (Picture Frustration Study-PF Test) is especially built to investigate tolerances and the way to react to daily stress. Made of 24 images such as the ones in figures 14 and 15, in which there are at least 2 characters in frustrating situations triggered by an object or a character, the technique requires the subject to spontaneously express their attitude in a few words or a phrase (in the first 16 images). In the next 8 situations, the subject must respond to an accusation or an insult. After the test, the client reads the given answers and the examiner notes the mimic, voice inflexions etc., clarifies possible ambiguities. The answers are evaluated according to: the aggressiveness direction, which places subjects in several categories. They might be: *extraggressive*, *intraggressive* and *imaggressive*, namely subjects who direct their aggressive reaction towards the environment, towards themselves or who do not grant any meaning to the transmitted situation: “no one is guilty” (Rășcanu, R., 2003).

In the unifying-experiential approach of aggressiveness, its integration is targeted, starting from the evaluation of the client's psycho-affective dynamics, depending on the established objectives and adapted to the client's specific content, context and reality. In an experiential context, the use of the technique becomes only a part of the therapeutic process, while the emphasis is on the therapeutic relationship and on solving the main themes. The sessions were set right from the beginning, in order for the participants to have a clear and securing image regarding what will be next. Within the present research, personal experiential development implied a sequence of 5 sessions structured as follows:

Session 1: *The game of names*

The objectives of this first session were to facilitate the interactions between the participants in order to increase the trust inside the group, to stimulate the interest in self-knowledge, decreasing the resistances in order to facilitate some authentic, spontaneous relations. Within this first session, we also told and negotiated the rules of the group.

The technique used in the provocation stage was “*The Game of names*” (an introduction exercise). Each participant must find an adjective (regarding the state or mood) that starts with the first letter of their first name, describe it, justify and explain to the others the choice and the significance (“I am Irene the irritated one, because...”). The game allows self-evaluation in a non-threatening manner and contributes to the familiarization with others.

The adolescents participating in the unifying-experiential group of personal development were invited in the room that was to host the sessions. The chairs were placed in a circular shape in order to facilitate visual contact. After creating a familiar atmosphere, the trainers began with an introductory speech: “Welcome to this group! As we told you in the moment we discussed in the classroom, these sessions aim to help you know yourselves better and be more aware of what you want, who you really are and also to be more aware of others, the ones around you, in order to communicate better, to be careful with their needs and to make yourselves better understood. Also, by participating in this group, you may learn better to build harmonious relationships with others, to solve misunderstandings in a manner that could help you and the others and to manage your fury, anger, sorrow, so that something good could come out of it instead of violent bursts and escalated conflicts.” In the subsequent minutes, we moved on to the “Game of names” exercise. After each participant made an association of an adjective with his/her last name, we moved on to the second stage of the exercise, based on a non-verbal presentation exercise. The participants were asked to introduce themselves in a non-verbal manner, through a gesture.

The introduction started with this gesture. Subsequently, the adolescents were encouraged to ask questions, thus verifying their assumptions about the significance of the gesture by running them through its author. After this exercise, the participants became more open and the second one increased this state even more. The introduction made by associating the name with an adjective brought a non-judgmental climate inside the group. The participants understood they could express freely, the way they felt, in an authentic way, without

being criticized or evaluated. The trainers' attitude and remarks were meant to strengthen this state.

Through these two experiential exercises, the adolescents obtained a higher degree of familiarization. They now have a larger quantity of information about the group and take part in something entirely new: a group in which they can express freely, in which they can self-disclose without being judged and criticized, according to their statements.

Through the discussions and analysis related to the experiential applications, they identified their communication needs better and found creative ways to satisfy them by means of their own resources.

At the end of this session, a group greeting created by the participants was established.

Session 2: *The Game of secrets*

The objectives of the second session consisted of simulating spontaneity, facilitating the interactions between participants, creating a climate designed to increase the group cohesion and diversifying the way of expressing emotions.

The technique used was the game called "The Game of secrets". Participants have to write something about themselves that they consider embarrassing, uncomfortable or frustrating. After mixing up the notes, the anonymous note will be read by another member of the group as if it were his/her. The game contributes to the facilitation of the self-disclosing behavior, to the increase of the empathic behavior, to openness and to quitting self-censorship.

Session 3: *The "bridge and rocks" metaphor*

The objectives aimed in this session were to facilitate the acknowledgement of emotions and expression of needs, to experiment the communication based on metaphor and to decrypt the messages from implicit communication, to increase the degree of trust in the other members of the group, as exponents of the external world and to develop empathy and emotional expressivity to a certain extent.

Within this session, the technique used was the metaphor: by means of creative meditation, participants go in an imaginary journey by climbing an abrupt mountain, which is difficult to reach. On the way, there are dangerous curves, road-blocking rocks, peaked cliffs, collapsed bridges and abysses. The metaphor symbolizes the confrontation with a difficult, apparently without solution, problem. The message suggests alternative ideas that are to replace the old approach, proved inefficient. In the end, participants are invited to share the experimented feelings with the others.

Session 4: *Open expression of feelings*

The objectives taken into account within this group session were to put in the foreground the assertive communication, the discovery of ways to react in frustrating situations, the identification of some resources in order to deal with such situations by focalizing the experience into the present.

This technique implied working in dyads. Participants are invited to make as many compliments as possible to their interaction partners ("I appreciate in you...", "I like..."). It is important that each of them notice how he/she feels when he/she compliments the other (happy, embarrassed, ashamed, angry etc.) and to verbalize his/her emotions ("I feel... because..."). The one receiving the compliments will answer by expressing his/her feelings ("I am happy with your compliment", "I feel embarrassed about what you said"). The exercise contributes to the development of empathy and expression of feelings.

Session 5: *Positive criticisms*

The objectives of this last session were to anchor the acquired acquisitions, to exercise a new way of expressing negative emotions, of using the activated personal resources in order to achieve some pro-social objectives. A special emphasize was placed on increasing one's own capacity to operate changes inside the inner system and to implement them into the external world.

The mainly used technique implied the formation of three groups, an observer and two actors. The first actor must criticize the other. It is important to criticize the behavior and not the person. Things must be presented by insisting on the constructive aspects and favorable consequences ("I am ashamed to tell you, but this blouse does not suit you, don't you think?", "I think it would be more appropriate to... What do you say?"), and not in the shape of a reproach. The exercise favors open, positive expression, acknowledgment and assumption of mistakes.

IV. Results analysis and interpretation

Hypothesis 1 – *There is a positive and significant correlation between the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration.*

Within the Pearson correlation, we discovered the existence of a positive and significant correlation ($r = 0.529$; $p = 0.000$) between the scores that indicate resistance to frustration and the scores that show the aggressiveness level estimated by E.P.Q. and also the existence of a positive and significant correlation ($r =$

0.533; $p = 0.000$) between the resistance to frustration scores and the aggressiveness level measured by E.P.I.

Hypothesis 2 – *There are significant differences regarding both the level of aggressiveness and the degree of resistance to frustration depending on the subjects' age.*

The subjects' means in resistance to frustration depending on age are the following: 93.61 (15-16 years old), 95.46 (17-18 years old) and 96.30 for the ones aged 19.

In order to verify this hypothesis, we used the *Two-Way ANOVA* statistical test. Before moving on to testing the hypothesis, we verified if the normality condition of the distribution is met. We used the Benferoni and the Tamhane tests in order to make a comparative analysis of the means of the three groups, taken by two.

The Lavene test confirmed the variance homogeneity at the level of resistance to frustration task scores ($p=0.415$). After the application of the multi-factorial analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 2.095 for a statistical threshold $p=0.128$, which showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding resistance to frustration depending on age.

The means of the aggressiveness levels (E.P.I.) depending on age are the following: 28.34 (15-16 years old), 28.31 (17-18 years old) and 28.50 for the ones aged 19.

The Lavene test confirmed the variance homogeneity at the level of the E.P.I. task scores ($p=0.342$). Following the application of the multi-factor analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 0.040 for a statistical threshold $p=0.960$, which shows that there are no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding the aggressiveness level depending on age.

The means of the aggressiveness levels (E.P.Q.) depending on age are the following: 36.13 (15-16 years old), 36.69 (17-18 years old) and 36.90 for the ones aged 19 years.

The Lavene test confirmed the variance homogeneity at the level of the E.P.Q. task scores ($p=0.482$). After the application of the multi-factorial analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 0.541 for a statistical threshold $p=0.584$, which showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding the aggressiveness level depending on the subjects' age.

Hypothesis 3 – *The subjects' gender will determine significant differences in the level of aggressiveness and resistance to frustration.*

We used the *One-Way ANOVA* statistical test in order to verify this hypothesis. In our situation, the independent variable (the subject's gender) has two levels – male and female.

The means of the aggressiveness levels (E.P.I.) depending on age are the following: 28.34 (15 - 16 years), 28.31 (17-18 years) and 28.50 for the ones aged 19 years.

The Lavene test confirmed the variance homogeneity at the level of the E.P.I. task scores ($p=0.342$). After the application of the single-factor analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 0.264 for a statistical threshold $p=0.609$, which showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding resistance to frustration depending on the subjects' gender.

After the application of the single-factor analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 0.206 for a statistical threshold $p=0.651$. Therefore, there were no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding the aggressiveness level (E.P.I.) depending on the subjects' gender.

After the application of the single-factor analysis of variance, we obtained a result of the test, the value of which was 0.188 for a statistical threshold $p=0.665$. Therefore, there were no significant differences between the means of the scores regarding the aggressiveness level (E.P.Q.) depending on the subjects' gender.

Hypothesis 4 – *There are statistically positive and significant correlations between the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration degree and the personality dominant (introvert/extravert).*

The truth-value of this hypothesis was verified by means of the Pearson correlation. Therefore, correlations between were made the personality dominant (E.P.I. and E.P.Q.) and the resistance to frustration task score, as well as between the personality dominant (E.P.I.) and the aggressiveness level estimated by E.P.I., between the personality dominant (E.P.Q.) and the aggressiveness level estimated by E.P.Q.

Therefore, positive, but insignificant correlations between the resistance to frustration degree and the personality dominant were obtained: $r = 0.090$; $p = 0.351$ (E.P.I.) and $r = 0.182$; $p = 0.057$ (E.P.Q.).

The statistical processing of the data indicates a statistically positive and significant correlation between the aggressiveness level and the personality dominant: (E.P.I.) – $r = 0.589$; $p = 0.001$.

Statistically significant results are also noticed in the aggressiveness level and the personality dominant: (E.P.Q.) – $r = 0.651$; $p = 0.000$.

Hypothesis 5 – *The involvement of the subjects in an experiential work program determines the decrease of the aggressiveness and frustration level.*

Before starting the experiential work program, the mean of the aggressiveness level for the participating subjects was 36.57, with a standard deviation of 5.82.

Before starting the experiential work program, the mean of the resistance to frustration level for the participating subjects was 94.97, with a standard deviation of 12.02.

At the end of the experiential work program, the mean of the aggressiveness level for the participating subjects was 32.63, with a standard deviation of 5.55.

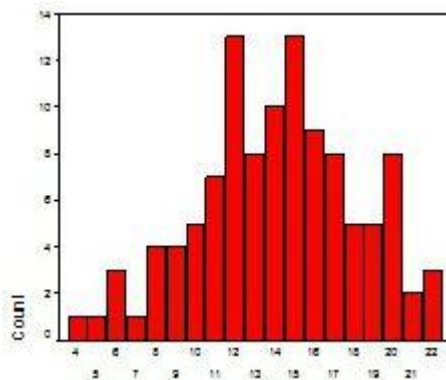
At the end of the experiential work program, the mean of the resistance to frustration level for the participating subjects was 90.11, with a standard deviation of 12.24.

The t test for dependent samples indicates the fact that between the two moments there is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) regarding both the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration level.

After the application of the *Rosenzweig* test, we obtained three types of scores: intra-punitive, extra-punitive and the total score regarding the resistance to frustration.

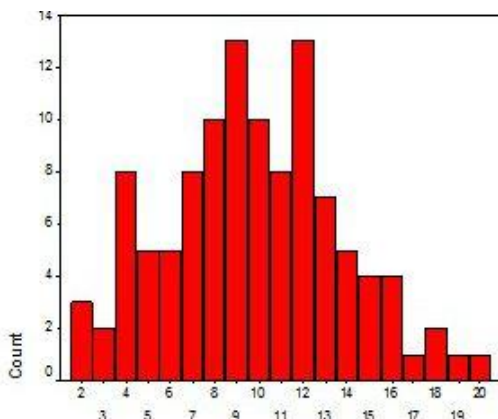
The *intra-punitive* or the *extra-punitive* scores were obtained according to the following rule: a point is given for the answer given for each image; if in the subject's answer, the guilt is attributed to someone else, then a point will be given for the extra-punitive orientation; if in his answer, the subject considers himself guilty, a point will be given for the intra-punitive orientation.

Therefore, the score of the two scales can vary between 0 and 24. The descriptive statistics highlights the fact that for the extra-punitive orientation the minimal score is 4 points, with a maximum of 22 points. The mean of the answers on this scale is 14.15, with a standard deviation of 4.03.

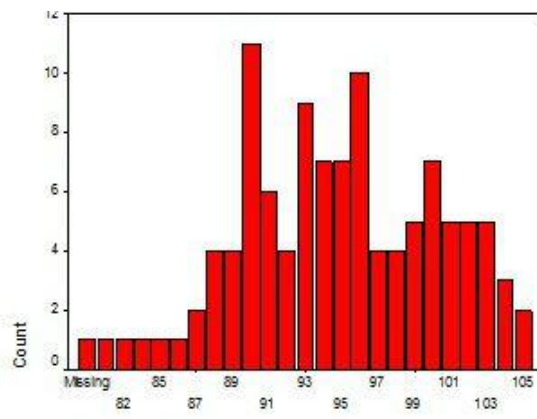


Extra-punitive frustration score

Regarding the intra-punitive orientation, the minimal score is 2, with a maximum of 22 points. The mean of the scores for this scale is 9.75, with a standard deviation of 3.96.



Intra-punitive frustration score



Frustration total score

The score highlighting the resistance to frustration was calculated based on a similar principle. Every reaction, every word (spoken or written) that expressed fury, tension, aggressiveness was granted one point. The descriptive statistics informs us that the scores regarding the resistance to frustration range between 80 and 105, with a mean of 94.94 and a standard deviation of 5.39.

V. Results

It is necessary to conduct an interpretation of the subjects' sincerity regarding the two personality questionnaires – E.P.I. and E.P.Q.

Concerning the *lie (E.P.I.)* scale, the scores ranged between 0 and 4, with a recorded mean of 2.28 and a standard deviation of 1.13. It can be noticed that none of the subjects passed the critical threshold of 5 points at this scale. For the *neuroticism* scale, the scores ranged between 9 and 25 points, with a mean of 15.25 and a standard deviation of 3.99. The correlation between the scores of these two scales is $r = -0.036$, with a statistical significance $p = 0.705$. These indicators highlight that there is a very small and statistically insignificant correlation between the scores, because $p > 0.05$. These results allow us to state that, generally, the subjects did not present a motivation towards dissimulation.

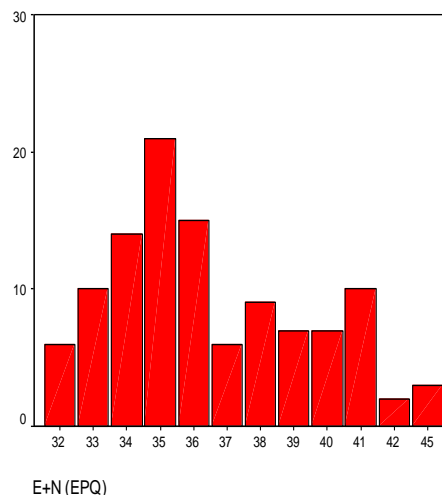
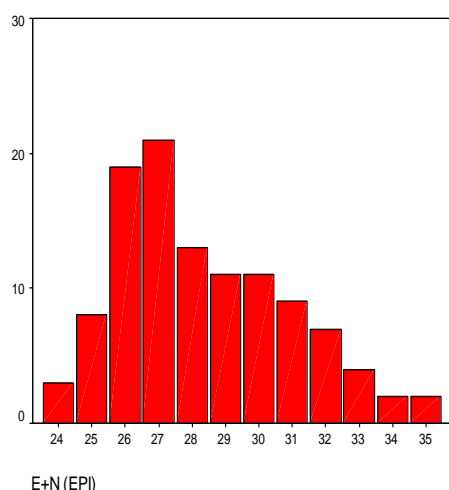
In the case of the *E.P.Q.* questionnaire, the score for the lie scale ranged between 1 and 9 points, with a mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 2.04. At the neuroticism scale, the scores range between 11

and 28 points, with a recorded mean of 20.08 and a standard deviation of 3.83. The correlation between the scores of these two scales is $r = -0.157$, with a statistical significance $p = 0.102$. These indicators highlight that there is a very small and statistically insignificant correlation between the scores, because $p > 0.05$. These results allow us to state that the subjects did not present a motivation towards dissimulation at this questionnaire either.

Regarding E.P.I. and E.P.Q., a correlation between aggressiveness and the high scores in extraversion and neuroticism was noticed.

Therefore, at one pole (low level), aggressiveness presents the stable-introvert combination, while at the other (high level), the neurotic-extravert combination. Therefore, the final score, the one that shows us the aggressiveness level was calculated by summing up the scores.

The scores regarding the aggressiveness measured by E.P.I., range between 24 and 35 with a recorded mean of 28.35 and a standard deviation of 2.57. The aggressiveness expressed by the E.P.Q. questionnaire has a minimal score of 32 points and a maximum of 45 points, with a recorded mean of 36.54 and a standard deviation of 3.05. There is a statistically significant ($p=0.000$) correlation of 0.610 between the scores of these two questionnaires, which shows that there is a strong relationship between them and the results have a high level of reliability.



VI. Conclusions

The acknowledgment of the young man's personal identity is a difficult and complex process. The prolonging of the tuition duration and the parents' hesitation to provide the teenager with a special status, deprive him of the social role he aspires to exert and

make him dependent on the adult further on.

This is the source of some conflicts, feelings of solitude, rebellion, egocentric tendencies and even a certain oscillation of the adolescent personality. There are some authors who even talk about a veritable "normal pathology" of adolescence, represented by

multiple affective, character and cognitive disorders, by the originality crisis and marginal behaviors that can be easily mistaken for extreme pathological states.

It is important to know, as much as possible, the students' particularities, but also the educational contexts in which they manifest – both formally, within the institutionalized framework of the school and especially informally – in which the students manifest more freely and naturally (family, group of friends etc.) in order to better use the best educational measures. In the case of conflictive situations that can trigger violence, the causes or factors which led to such manifestations should not be neglected.

Therefore, we plead for the elaboration of some assistance and counseling programs in schools for the two interaction partners from the conflictive situations. Setting up this kind of programs requires the presence of a multi-disciplinary team: school counselor, psychologist, and educator, teachers from different school subjects, principle, school inspectors and parents. Only a complex team can run an educational activity, which, in time, can form communication skills and abilities, interpersonal and social relating and it can lead to the formation of some empathic capacities and correct relating aptitudes, which represent means of reducing or defeating the students' aggressive tendencies.

Regarding the research hypothesis, it was revealed that:

1. There was a positive and significant correlation between the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration degree.
2. There were no significant differences regarding the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration degree depending on the subjects' age.
3. The subjects' gender does not determine significant differences in the aggressiveness and resistance to frustration level.
4. There were positive and statistically significant correlations between the aggressiveness level and the resistance to frustration degree and the personality dominant (introvert/extravert).
5. The aggressiveness and frustration levels decrease after the subjects' participation in an experiential work group.

Involving the teenagers in metaphorical, expressive and creative group activities has benefic effects regarding not only the decrease of aggressiveness, frustration, conflicts and intra or interpersonal tensions, but also regarding the increase of self-confidence, strengthening of the self-esteem and crystallization of personality traits.

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