

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND AGGRESSION IN EGALITARIAN AND PATRIARCHAL FAMILIES⁶

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Abstract:

The study presents comparative data about the aggression dynamic in the family based on its egalitarian and patriarchal characteristic. Tests have been applied to 40 people from 20 families, 10 families of egalitarian type and 10 of patriarchal type. The obtained results can be used as guidelines in the counseling of families with dysfunctions generated by aggressive behavior.

Keywords: *family, egalitarian, patriarchal, aggression, personality traits*

Argument

In contemporary society, the family knows an extremely fast transformation. Only in the last two decades it has known unexpected changes. These changes, materialized in the proliferation of juvenile cohabitation, a higher marriage age or big age differences between partners, the late arrival of a child, education level alignment of the partners, strong social life participation of the wife, widening of the generation gap, have led to an increased rhythm of the role changing in families and their defective assimilation by the partners. Hence possible aggressive reactions to the behavior adopted by one of the family members.

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Theoretical reasoning

A fundamental concept used in this study is that of family, referring especially to family types. In order to summarize several family definitions, Adina Băran in her book „Family today. A social-pedagogical perspective” defines family as follows:

„Family is a social group that will or will not include adults of both genders (for example, single parent families), will or will not include one or more children (for example, couples without children), that can or are not born in their marriage (for example, adopted children or a partner`s children from a previous marriage). The relationship of the adults can or cannot originate in marriage (for example, couples that live together) they can or are not sharing a common house (for example, couples that commute). The adults can have or not have a sexual cohabitation and the relationship can involve socially valorized emotions such as: love, attraction, respect for the parents and admiration.”

The individuals' life in the family institutional frame contains two essential elements: a biological side, constant, almost unchanged during time and a social side, in permanent change. From a sociological point of view, family represents the typical example for a primary group characterized by strong relationships of the “face-to-face” type through the association and intimate collaboration of all its members. (Băran, 2006) From here we can point out some family typologies. One of them would be related to the origin family (the father family) and the conception family (conjugal family). The first one is the family in which you are born and raised and the second one is the one built through your own marriage. Family can also be characterized through the inclusion level of the family group in the nuclear family (consisting of husband, wife and their children) or extended (that includes the other relatives). Another criterion to be taken into consideration in the study of the family would be the way authority is exerted. We distinguish between three family systems: patriarchal, matriarchal or egalitarian. In the patriarchal system, the authority in the family is held by the eldest man in the extended family or by the husband in the nuclear family type. In the matriarchal systems, the authority is held by the eldest woman or the wife. Obviously, the present confirms that the most common model is represented by the egalitarian system, the power and authority being equally divided among husband and wife.

At some point, the dynamic of the family relations can include such acute aggression elements so that the family is destabilized. In the attempt to explain these imbalances we have taken into consideration aggressive behaviors. From the theories that explain aggression we have based this study on the one of the aggressive behavior as a reactive

behavior. According to the reactive theories, the aggressive behavior is a reaction to the frustrating, disagreeable situations. Freud's theory about the fact that when the expression of instincts is frustrating an aggressive impulse is being induced has been later assumed by other scientists from the Yale University in the USA. This theory states that "the emergence of aggressive behavior is always based on the existence of frustration" and "the existence of frustration always leads to certain aggression forms" (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears apud Berkowitz, 1989).

Based on the results obtained from the research regarding the frustration – aggression relation that have been developed during time, researchers consider that in the frame of this relation "one must take into consideration the emotional and moral maturity/immaturity of the people, as well as the determined tolerance to frustration, among others, the character and temper, education and life experiences" (Preda 1998, p. 46).

Objective of the study

Identification of the personality characteristics, including the aggressive dimension with regard to the appurtenance to the two family types: patriarchal and egalitarian.

Study hypothesis

There is a significant difference in the aggression dimension depending on the appurtenance of the members to a patriarchal and an egalitarian type family.

Work variables

Independent variable: the family system (patriarchal and egalitarian)

Dependent variable: the personality dimensions (Edginess, Aggression, Depression, Excitability, Sociability, Calmness, Domination tendencies, Inhibition, Honesty, Extroversion, Emotional instability and Masculinity)

Test group

In this study we have investigated the members of two family lots, women and men, a total of 40 people from the Arad County.

The first lot consisted of 10 egalitarian type families with ages between 20 and 30 years and the second lot made out of 10 patriarchal type families between the age of 45 and 60 years.

Used instruments

Freiburg personality questionnaire (FPI) is a multiple phase personality questionnaire developed by J. Fahrenberg, H. Selg, R. Hampel and is built by combining a classic psychological system with one extracted from the psychiatric nosology that can be used in the clinical domain, as well as in the non-clinical (see Annex 1).

FPI contains 212 items, grouped in nine scales to which another 3 scales have been added by the authors so that a global image of the investigated personality can be obtained. The questionnaire is administered in group or individually, with no time limit (usually, it takes around 30-40 minutes to complete the questionnaire). The answer charts are corrected with the help of an answer grid or the computer. In order to perform an investigation with the FPI you require the questionnaire, the answer sheet for an isolated exam, the correction and elaboration of the final profile being facilitated by 12 grids (one for each variable of the questionnaire) and the presented scales.

The content of the questionnaire questions refer to states and behaviors, attitudes, habits and bodily complaints.

The construction of the FPI is based on the factor study of the items and their grouping in the nine factors that describe the personality dimensions that are part of the questionnaire. The interpretation of the questionnaire is based on the use of the behavioral criteria - that explains the two poles of the each scale – and that are described in the test manual. Plus, based on the inter correlation study between the questionnaire's scales, certain relations between these have been established that allow a more nuanced interpretation.

The test authors operate with two standard types, in stanine or in nine nominal classes and T quotas. The original manual of the test contains standards for all questionnaire forms, separately for the feminine and masculine population. A general standard for both populations is also presented. The stanine standard is being worked with more often, separately for the feminine and masculine population. The standardization in nine normalized classes is a very precise allotment system proportional to the Gauss curve. In such a standard, the average is situated around the class 5 level, 54% of the population being found between classes 4 and 6 – this being the area in which the normal average behavior oscillates. Any abnormality from this area is interpreted as tendency (classes 2-3; 7-8) or as specific dominant note (classes 1 and 9).

Data analysis and interpretation

Is there a significant difference in the aggression dimension depending on the appurtenance of the members to a patriarchal and an egalitarian type family?

In order to verify this hypothesis the two subject groups (patriarchal type and egalitarian type families) have statistically been compared through the personality traits as decisive factor for the aggression and the independent variable, family type, using the Independent Sample Test method (analysis between the average differences).

Table no.1*T SPSS Test*

				t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance threshold	Average difference
FPI1	EDGINESS	,000	1,000	,731	38	,469	,450
FPI2	AGGRESSION	1,038	,315	-1,659	38	,105	-,850
FPI3	DEPRESSION	,707	,406	-1,148	38	,258	-,650
FPI4	EXCITABILITY	2,526	,120	-2,484	38	,018	-1,200
FPI5	SOCIABILITY	,041	,841	,788	38	,436	,400
FPI6	CALMNESS	,089	,767	3,920	38	,000	1,750
FPI7	DOMINATION TENDENCIES	1,128	,295	-2,081	38	,044	-1,050
FPI8	INHIBITION	1,328	,256	-,982	38	,333	-,500
FPI9	HONESTY	1,484	,231	-,458	38	,650	-,300
FPI10	EXTRAVERSION	,021	,887	-,204	38	,839	-,100
FPI11	EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY	,468	,498	-3,427	38	,001	-1,700
FPI12	MASCULINITY	,056	,814	-,873	38	,388	-,450

From Table no. 1 we can observe at 38 statistical liberty degrees a coefficient $p < 0,05$, so that for the next personality dimensions the following significance thresholds have been obtained: FPI4 Excitability ($p=0,018$), FPI7 Dominance tendencies ($p=0,044$) significant from a statistical point of view, FPI6 Calmness ($p=0,000$), Emotional instability ($p=0,001$) strongly significant from a statistical point of view.

Table no. 2 Differences based on the family type (N=20 people, women and men, members of egalitarian type families, N=20 people, women and men, members of patriarchal type families).

Table no. 2

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error. Mean
FPI1	1	20	4,70	1,949	,436
	2	20	4,25	1,943	,435
FPI2	1	20	4,35	1,694	,379
	2	20	5,20	1,542	,345
FPI3	1	20	4,95	1,932	,432
	2	20	5,60	1,635	,366
FPI4	1	20	4,55	1,191	,266
	2	20	5,75	1,803	,403
FPI5	1	20	5,80	1,609	,360
	2	20	5,40	1,603	,358
FPI6	1	20	5,75	1,372	,307
	2	20	4,00	1,451	,324
FPI7	1	20	5,05	1,791	,400
	2	20	6,10	1,373	,307
FPI8	1	20	4,40	1,729	,387
	2	20	4,90	1,483	,332
FPI9	1	20	3,85	2,277	,509
	2	20	4,15	1,843	,412
FPI10	1	20	5,10	1,518	,340
	2	20	5,20	1,576	,352
FPI11	1	20	4,35	1,387	,310
	2	20	6,05	1,731	,387
FPI12	1	20	5,55	1,538	,344
	2	20	6,00	1,717	,384

From Table 2 we can extract significant differences from a statistical point of view in the aggression dimension depending on the family type, so that the personality dimensions Excitability, Calmness and Emotional instability have higher values in the patriarchal family type, whereas in the egalitarian family type the Domination tendency as a personality dimension has high values.

According to the theoretical concepts, in the patriarchal system authority in the family is held by the husband when in the egalitarian

system the power and authority are relatively divided among husband and wife.

In order to identify the aggression tendency in the for personality dimension types between men and women we will use the T Test from SPSS having as independent variable the masculine gender and the feminine gender and as dependent variable the personality dimensions Excitability, Calmness, Domination tendencies and Emotional instability.

Table no. 3

Test T SPSS

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F,,	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
FPI4	Excitability	,257	,615	2,484	38	,018	1,200
FPI6	Calmness	,019	,890	-2,323	38	,026	-1,150
FPI7	Domination tendencies	,703	,407	1,652	38	,107	,850
FPI11	Emotional instability	,404	,529	2,042	38	,048	1,100

From Table 3 we can observe at 38 degrees liberty statistical data with a coefficient of $p < 0,05$, so that for the next personality dimensions the following significance thresholds have been obtained: FPI4 Excitability ($p=0,018$), FPI6 Calmness ($p=0,026$), FPI11 Emotional instability ($p=0,048$) significant from a statistical point of view.

From Table no. 4 we can extract statistical differences between women and men from a personality dimension point of view: in the Excitability dimension for men we have obtained increased values that indicate irritability states, reduced tolerance to frustration, foolish talk (threats), lack of patience, discomfort, violent emotions, rage and aggression, and in the Emotional instability dimension, the masculine gender subjects show an unstable spirit, are always tensed, impassive, violent and often feel misunderstood and aggrieved. In the Calmness dimension, the women have obtained increased values the show patience, optimism, good humor with fast and efficient action.

Table no. 4.
Differences based on gender

	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		1.bărbați 2.femei			
FPI4	1	20	5,75	1,650	,369
	2	20	4,55	1,395	,312
FPI6	1	20	4,30	1,658	,371
	2	20	5,45	1,468	,328
FPI7	1	20	6,00	1,522	,340
	2	20	5,15	1,725	,386
FPI11	1	20	5,75	1,803	,403
	2	20	4,65	1,599	,357

Thus the hypothesis is being partially validated which states that there are significant differences in the aggression dimension based on the affiliation of the members to the patriarchal or egalitarian family type. From a statistical point of view, in the patriarchal family type the dominance belongs to the man who is aggressive, whereas the egalitarian family is characterized by a psychological and moral equilibrium.

Conclusions

The study's main objective was the general investigation of the aggression reality in the family, the identification and analysis of the aggression types in family, hence we investigated the members of two family lots, women and men, in total 40 people from the Arad County. According to the theoretical concepts, in the patriarchal system the authority is held by the aggressive husband, whereas in the egalitarian system the power and authority are relatively divided between husband and wife and there is a psychological and moral equilibrium.

One of the study's limits could be the social desirability because we are talking about a delicate subject that is under social opprobrium and tends to be masked and maintained only in the limits of family intimacy.

The obtained data has confirmed partially the first two hypotheses, so that from a statistical point of view significant differences have resulted depending on the affiliation of the members to a certain family type and also significant differences depending on the education level of the family members. These aspects can guide us in the counseling of aggressive people in couple, meaning we can reconsider the values that the patriarchal or egalitarian family structure is based on. Important in this is the embracing of behaviors based on knowing the status-role of

each family member and adjusting it at a cognitive and relational level when needed.

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