

# THE INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF TEENAGERS\*

O. D. Moldovan

**Olga Domnica MOLDOVAN**

Professor, PhD,

Aurel Vlaicu University, Arad

**Abstract:** We approached the development of personality traits and self-esteem during puberty and adolescence, to observe the influence of the variable "single parent" to these psychological dimensions. The motivation for this study is of scientific type, knowing the high incidence of divorce in Romania and the education problems of educating and forming the adolescents in families with single parents/mothers. It is known that because of the emotional load of puberty and adolescence can be caused anxiety and depressive states, resulting in a higher incidence of eating behavior disorders, drug abuse, suicide attempts. Early psychological evaluation, personal guidance of adolescents towards self-knowledge, to express appropriately explosive feelings, but also the intervention by counseling programs for optimizing the personality potential, the development of self-regulating communication purposes, become prime targets in this dimension of developmental psychology. The article presents the results of a study conducted on two samples of adolescents: with both parents and with a single parent regarding the development of some personality features.

**Keywords:** teenagers, self-esteem, personality features, single parent families, two parent families.

## Theoretical framework

At the age of adolescence, the child belonging to modern family tends to behave in front of parents in two ways: against them or away from them. In the first case, he believes that parents do not understand him and decides to "fight", proving that they can succeed without their

---

\* Paper presented at The International Symposium *Research and Education in an Innovation Era*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, December 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 2016, Arad

help, but applying a different mentality and a different scale of values. In the second case, the child does not fight, but builds a world of his own, isolates himself from the parents and accepts around him only those who understand him. From this perspective we can conclude that contemporary society is torn by interpersonal contradictions and this gives additional emphasis when it comes from different generations.

In this context, the teenager is forced to think about what kind of person wants to become, what would be the world and society in which he lives. With them, on the subjective, psychological plan, there is a process of changing of the self image, which falls in conjunction with the adolescent tendency to describe himself. This "creation" of a new identity occurs often in opposition to adult image and the adoption of social and group norms present to the others from the same young generation. Major changes occur in social plan: teenagers spend more time with others of the same age and spend much less time with the parents and the family than when they were children. However, adolescence is the period when are taken important decisions for the personal development and are made plans for the future.

In this study we shall see how are influenced the plans for the future, the social, body, emotional self-esteem of the adolescents by mono- or two parent family environment.

We resorted to this kind of research as increasingly often we hear couples in contemporary society, claiming to be on the brink of divorce. Whether it is a step unilaterally or bilaterally, in both cases produces a traumatic syndrome which, according to mental robustness of the people involved, can have major effects. Currently there is a trend of increasing divorce, for which is required a careful study of this phenomenon and of the factors which produced it (urbanization, changes in family functions, increasing emancipation of women, decreasing influence of religion and other related to tradition items, changes in people's attitudes towards marriage, increased length of marriage as a result of increasing life expectancy etc.).

Immediately after the divorce the child feels removed from the focus area of family interest, loses confidence in parents, feels deprived of the protection implicit afforded to him and sees himself as abandoned, weak and vulnerable in front of a life about which he is aware only by the dark side. Trauma of parents' divorce is broad and can develop unpredictably.

For the children come from families in which there are various forms of violence, the divorce is a release. Often from outside the separation is seen as a liberation but in children soul remains a bitter for life.

Living together in families with one parent - usually the mother - is considered a moment of crisis, the divorce and subsequent the obligations of a single parent bringing a new context for the normal development of children. But many families are recovering from the initial shock of divorce and resume their normal functioning in a few years, especially if the conflict and continues adversity do not continue. Although some children manifest disturbances in development, others show an increased resistance to shock, as additional competence, adaptive. In fact, not only that the negative effects of divorce can be avoided, but it is also possible to have some long-term positive effects of this difficult period. This is what is trying to find out the present research (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2014).

Taking into account the social values which are permanently changing, confusing the overall family environment, arbitrary political decisions in education, the adolescent will not have another alternative but to assimilate superior mechanisms for adaptation, the flexibility of thinking, the openness to social, to emotional, to self acceptance and tolerance, to ensure success, both academically and professionally and personally.

Thus the fact that a teenager lives in a family with one parent does not automatically mean that the child will have problems because many such children become successful adults. And the few studies on this subject had a number of positive aspects such as: adolescents from single parent families learn to take more responsibility, learn better take care of themselves, have a better understanding to their parents and even a much stronger relationship with the parent with whom they live. Also, these children feel valued in the family, are involved in daily household activities and receive appreciation for their help to the single parent.

### **Personality - definitions and explanatory theories**

The personality psychology resorted to the use of descriptive thematic units of personality, describing the personality of the different categories of terms (features, factors, skills, motives, Self, roles, attitudes, constructs).

Each of these terms has generated a certain theory of personality, then depending on the degree of proximity and similarity were related to each other allowing us to build explanatory-interpretative models of personality which in turn have allowed wider various perspectives of approaching the personality. M. Zlate presents in his "Ego and personality" (2004) four perspectives of approaching the personality (atomistic, structural, systemic, psychosocial), while revealing their

theoretical and applied implications, first in a general context, then in a particular one.

From the systemic perspective "personality appears as the top integrative unit that serves as a frame of reference for the study and interpretation of various dimensions of the psychic system, as a superordinate system that can not be reduced nor confused with the various psychic processes and functions, which may not be claved to primary psychobehavioral biological structures or, finally, as a hipercomplex dynamic system involving a plurilevel hierarchical organization relative independent to the components etc. Since any system has input-state-output means that they will be found also at the personality level (Zlate, 2004).

The psychosocial perspective, on the other hand, is geared towards capturing of the concrete personality, as expressed in the particular social statements and conjectures, in the interrelations system and the collective psychology, depending on the psychosocial attributes of the human beings, namely the statutes and roles, by its levels of aspiration and expectation, by its skills structure and the structure his views. (Golu, Green, Zlate, 1995).

However, the interpretive-explanatory possibilities of the four perspectives approaches of personality are not considered equal by Zlate, and the author brings together the two perspectives into one, called systemic-psycho-social perspective, offering new explanatory-interpretative opportunities on it. The approach of personality gives us a contradictory aspect: there is no unanimity on the nature of its object of research, there is no single model of personality, but heterogeneous models, because the term personality has different meanings in different contexts. Multidisciplinary approach of personality leads to understand human life and complex knowledge of various human profiles. (Ilut, 2005)

The combination of these facets of personality, the interrelations between them will lead to structure different types of personalities or some functionality of interpersonal relations.

In the man total and integral personality, which we conceive in terms of philosophy, on the one hand, as a concrete personality and, on the other hand, as the ideal of achievement, the significance is not give by the qualities, "the configurations of features" the structures, the systems and subsystems of personality, but particular kind of integration and behavior using of them. Therefore, a great importance has what the man truly is, what he thinks he is, what he wants to be, what he thinks about others and believes that others think about him, his manifested behavior being in function of one or other of these elements or of the particular

mode of their integration and functioning. Thus, professor Zlate presents the following "multifaceted personality": real personality (PR) as it really is; self-assessed personality (PA) that is the image that the individual has about himself; ideal personality (PI) that is envisioned, desired, that to which the individual aspires and try to form; perceived personality (PP), individual image about others; projecting personality (PPro), what the individual believes that others are thinking of him; manifested personality (PM), that externalized, objectified in behavior. All these "facets" of personality do not have a value in themselves, but it appears in their interaction (Zlate, 2004, p. 50).

The *real personality* (PR) is constituted by all the processes, functions, tendencies, traits and psychological states that man has at one time and he can make anytime available, fact which ensures the identity and sustainability over time. In real personality the own individual experience, blends, harmonizes or differentiates, detaches from one and others experience; concepts, thoughts, attitudes and intimate opinions face with those of the other people, correcting and deeping themselves, the original psycho-individual attitudes and prejudices are reinforced or changed and psychosocial "demolished".

The *self-assessed personality* (AP) includes all representations, ideas, believes of the human being about his own individual personality, usually included in what is called self-image. It's the way in which the individual perceives himself, what he thinks about himself, the role that he assigns in relation to others.

Self-image represents an integrator and organizer of the psychic life of the individual, with a major role in the choice of values and goals (Zaharia, 2012). It is considered the central core of the personality, landmark, orientative constant, the defining element of social status and role.

The *ideal personality* (PI) is what the individual wants to obtain, what he would be, how he would like to be, it represents the personality projected in the future, the ideal to be achieved, the model that the individual proposes to build during his life. Having essentially a prospective character, the ideal personality has important forces and stimulating functions. She drives the individual to action, to search, detect and retaining the best and favorable informational content, actionable ways and means, forms psychobehavioral forms to ensure a swift and effective social adaptation to environmental demands.

The personality model has value of purpose and especially of guidance in relation to the actual conduct of the individual. It allows the purchase and anticipated commissioning of some behaviors.

Based on social learning the ideal personality can become real personality. From a psychotherapeutic and educational point of view, the essential question is the value of the person as a model of psychobehavioral traits and features of personality: the more they will be more "realistic", closer in agreement with the intrinsic nature of that person, the more likely their conversion will be higher in reality. But the discrepancy between real and desired, between potentialities and aspirations could lead to the installation of psycho-behavioral disorders and they have to be pursued also in the case teenagers and adolescents.

The *perceived personality* (PP) includes all representations, ideas, assessments on others. As individuals develop their self-image, so he formed a picture about others, who guides his behavior towards them. Image about each other and especially the correctness or incorrectness thereof are based, on the one hand, on the capacity of the person known to externalize, to leave known, and on the other hand, on the capacity of the knowing person to decipher the essential in the information that are offered.

The perception of another or the image of another register as an essential fact in individual personality, adjusting them directly his relationships with others. Although early in the interpersonal acts it is highly mobile, even fluctuating due to situational mobility and fluctuations of the relations and behaviors of people involved in relationships, over time, certain behavioral invariants of other people a crystallized and stable, giving it value of criterion in interpersonal behaviors (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2015).

The *projected personality* (PPro) includes all thoughts, feelings, liking that believes an individual that the other have, cherish, and do others on his own - what has been called "self-image attributed to the world" (Ceașu, 1983), ie what I think the other people think of me. Such an image sometimes appears as the expression of the inner most desired wishing of the individual to appear in the eyes of the other and sometimes as the immediate reflex of the others behavior towards him. In this case the individual develop and operate the conduct of waiting, expecting that the others behave towards him corresponding to the image that he believes they have about him. Self-image assigned to the world is veritable regulator of interpersonal behaviors, the two partners must consider and think how that is reflected in each other's eyes.

Last but not least, *the manifested personality* (PM) is represented by all the traits and qualities that find their expression in specific ways, in their own specific behavioral externalization and objectification. The manifested personality is the "intersection" between individual and social, between the psychic interiority of the individual and society

normativity. In such an intersection it can appear confluences, harmonization and dissociation, disagreements, which grants to the total personality of the individual a specific existential trajectory.

Analyzing the facets of personality, it is noted that these are not isolated, separated from each other, but rather intertwine, presuppose each other, intersect and convert into each other. Due to the relations of cooperation or conflict between them, extending some in others or their compensation, as the association or value disparity disjunction, human personality takes on a special "presentation" (Zlate, 2004).

In the present study, the personality theories and facets will be addressed exclusively from the point of view of the role and stage of forming of adolescents, based on the image and role in global personality development emerged from the relations and interrelations between its facets.

The present study aims to examine first whether teenagers are with single - divorced parents - have a level of self-esteem lower than those in two parent families and whether these adolescents present significant differences in the development of personality traits. Acquiring a realistic self-esteem is one of the basic needs of the child, and this is formed on the basis of personality traits formation of a complete and consistent representation of itself (with evaluative landmarks from families and school, with customized rules depending on each family).

In view of the above observations, we started from the assumption that adolescents reared in single-parent families will present self-esteem deficit and a difference in the development of personality traits, this being due primarily to lack of rigorous parental control, of satisfying some fundamental emotional needs from the parents part who themselves go through a period of crisis.

### **Research hypotheses**

Based on observations in the literature, we assumed that:

**H1:** Teenagers coming from single parent families will get on average significantly lower scores on the overall amount of self-esteem scale test (ETES) compared with adolescents from families with both parents.

**H2:** Teenagers coming from single parent families will get on average significantly lower scores on self-esteem dimensions established by test-esteem Scale (ETES) compared with adolescents from families with both parents.

**H3:** Scores of teenagers coming from single parent families will differ significantly from personality factors established with HSPQ (Cattell personality questionnaire) compared to adolescents from families with both parents.

**H4:** We assume that adolescents from families with both parents present, on average, higher scores on emotional stability factors, expansion, maturity and emotional integration compared to the group of teenagers coming from single parent families.

**H5:** We assume that scores of teenagers from single parent families will have at the intelligence factor from the personality questionnaire scores significantly lower than those from families with both parents.

## **Subjects**

In our research, we investigated two groups of teenagers, including 35 teenagers come from single-parent families (with single mothers - divorced) and 33 adolescents come from two parent families, all high school students. In total, they were investigated 78 adolescents (44 boys and 34 girls), aged between 15 and 19 years.

Among adolescents coming from single parent families, 18 were girls and 17 - boys, aged between 15 and 19 years. They lived with single mothers, divorced but was not determined the period of time passed from parents' divorce. In all cases the mother was engaged in the labor market and support themselves or with their parents help.

Among adolescents coming from two parent families, 11 were girls and 22 - boys. Their ages ranged between 16 and 19; all are students in classes IX-XII of high-school

## **Methods used**

For data gathering regarding the self esteem and self-image, we applied two questionnaires:

- ETES esteem Scale (Echelle Toulousaine d'Estime de Soi) - pubertal and adolescents version (adapted on the population of adolescent by the psychologist Adriana Craciun 1998).

- Personality Questionnaire for teenagers of Cattell (HSPQ) - developed by Cattell and Sealy in 1966 based on research on the manifestation of personality questionnaire 16PF factors in adolescence.

*The Self-esteem Scale Toulouse* - ETES (Echelle Toulousaine d'Estime de Soi), was the first test instrument we used and was published in 1994, the authors being Nathalie Roussel-Oubrayrie, Claire Safont-Mottay and Myriam De Leonardis, of the University of Toulouse France.

Composed of 60 items, ETES determines the level of self-esteem, identifying areas of vulnerability revealed by self themselves in several aspects: emotional, physical, social, school and prospective. These aspects correspond to the five dimensions of self-esteem: Emotional Self - SE; School Self - SC; Social Self - SS; Physical Self - SP; Prospective Self - SF - Self person related to the project in the future.



The second tool of research, Personality Questionnaire for teenagers Cattell (HSPQ) provides a summary of data on the evolution of the personality factors established by the author in the 16 factors of personality Questionnaire in 1950 during the period between 11 and 18 years old, depending on age and gender criteria.

The inventory turns from 12 source traits defined by factor analysis, and the items are selected based on those factors saturation, without specifying how they were originally formulated or elected. The factors evaluated by factor analysis are bipolar constructs trying to contain the crowd of behavioral manifestations specific to the named dimension, gradually, from one of the poles thereof characterized by a maximum expression in the behavior of the dimension extreme, to the other, characterized by a maximum expression of the opposite (Minulescu, 2000).

### **Results and discussions**

We compared the averages obtained by the group of teenagers coming from single parent families, at the questionnaire to assess self-esteem or certain personality factors established by Cattell personality questionnaire with the averages obtained by the lot of teenagers coming from two parent families.

Comparisons were performed using Student t-test for comparison of means of two independent samples, test that shows if confirmed or refuted hypothesis of the study and whether there are significant differences between statistical averages of groups of subjects. All processing was performed using SPSS 17.00 for Windows application options.

We will present the results of our research presenting the hypotheses as follows:

*Hypothesis 1 - Teenagers coming from single parent families will get on average significantly lower scores on the overall amount of self-esteem scale test (ETES) compared with adolescents from families with both parents.*

Using the "t" test for independent samples, for this hypothesis was concluded that the averages of the two samples differ significantly ( $t = 3.457$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ), but observations on media samples shows that the average scores of global self-esteem is higher for teenagers coming from single parent families than others (see table 1 and figure 1).

Table 1. Comparison between the averages between the two sample on the overall amount of self-esteem scale test

<i>SELF ESTEEM – GLOBAL VALUE</i>			
<i>Adolescents from single parents families (ASPF)</i>	Value of test „t”  t = 3,457	Significance threshold  p = 0,01	Average = 46,20
<i>Adolescents with both parents (ABP)</i>			Average = 41,09

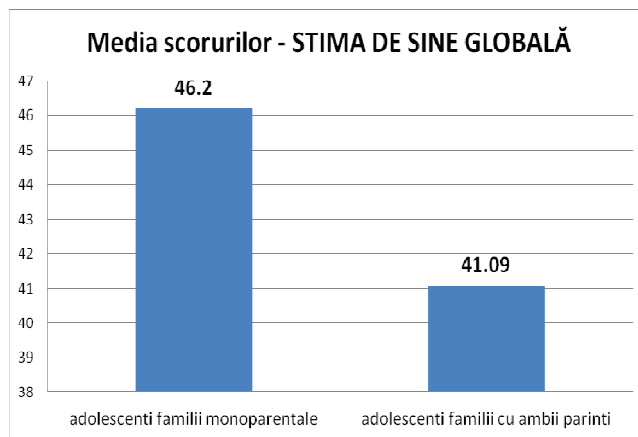


Figure 1. Comparison between the averages between the two sample on the overall amount of self-esteem scale test

Although social perception led us to assume that there will be an underestimation of the self from teenagers coming from single parent families, the study gave us the exact opposite: a higher level of self-esteem for these children and a lower level for those from families with both parents. According to Standard self-esteem Scale, worth over 48 points represent an overestimation of self-image, and scores between 22 to 28 points represents an medium level of self-esteem, a capacity for objective consideration of the teenagers. The significant difference

recorded for the overall self-esteem refers to a slight overestimation of the self (global value mean = 46.2) of the adolescents in single-parent families and a medium value (41.09) for the adolescents from two parent families.

So the first working hypothesis that single-parent family will negatively influence the self-esteem of adolescents raised by single mothers, is not confirmed, but the study will be much deeper and will detail the formation structure of self-esteem in adolescents and how this construct is influenced by variable "single parent" in analyzing the next hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2.** *Teenagers coming from single parent families will get on average significantly lower scores on self-esteem dimensions established by test-esteem Scale (ETES) compared with adolescents from families with both parents.*

From the following table we can deduce that the size of the Self are not presenting significant differences between adolescents coming from single parent families and others, except the Self prospective which records significant differences between the two groups of subjects, but not to confirm the hypothesis. Thus, as with the global values of self-esteem, the average of subjects from families with both parents is lower than the average of adolescents from single parent families, contrary to the hypothesis formulated (see table 2)

**Table 2. Self esteem Dimensions – comparison between the two samples**

Self Esteem Dimensions	Test „t”	Significance threshold	ASPF	APB
			Average	Average
Physic Self	2.472	0.16 > 0.05	9.89	8.79
Emotional Self	2.527	0.14 > 0.05	9.4	8.33
School Self	2.291	0.25 > 0.05	7.94	6.61
Social Self	-0.09	0.99 > 0.05	9.57	9.58
Prospective Self	4.260	0.00 < 0.05	<b>9.26</b>	<b>7.64</b>

After statistical analysis of the values of the two samples we analyze the average values on each dimension of self-esteem, relating to the standard of the used scale (fig.2.).

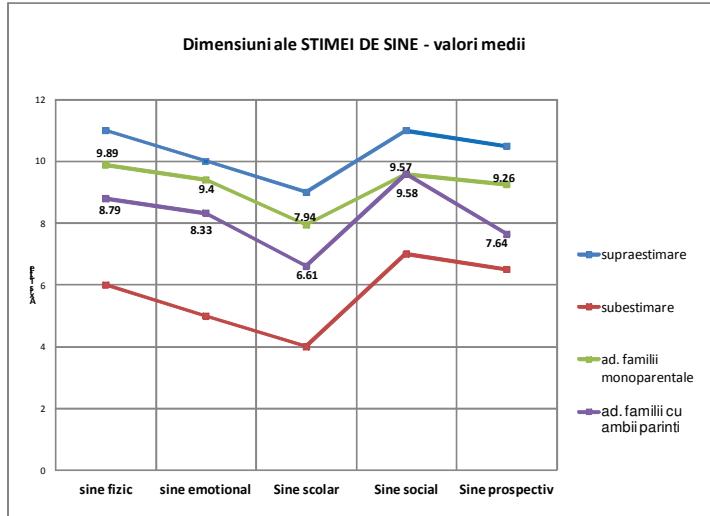


Figure 2. Values of the dimensions of Self-esteem

From the above chart we can observe the tendency of the adolescents from single parent families to overestimate themselves and to have a location around the average, so a more objective self-esteem, of adolescents from families with both parents.

In other words, adolescents with divorced parents, brought up by single mothers have a high appreciation over their bodily appearance (9.89), think they have a better control over emotions (9.4) have an objective view on school performance (7.94) have a tendency to overestimate the social, of their own skills of communication and adaptation in collective (9.57) and have a very good picture about their ability to integrate into the adult world, about the affirmation of self, or about their implication in building their future.

On the other hand, the adolescents from families with both parents have an objective picture about their physical appearance (8.79), have also objectivity regarding their capacity to control of emotions and impulsivity (8.33), are assessed correctly regarding school performance and their presentation to education (6.61). We record a trend of overestimation at this category of subjects in social self (9.58), thus overstating their social skills and perhaps how they are seen by others.

Still appears a statistically significant difference from the first group of subjects linked to the assessment of the ability to integrate into the adult world (7.74), and involvement in building their future.

Nor the second hypothesis of the study is not confirmed, meaning that, on the whole, the self-image of adolescents from single-parent families does not suffer nor in its structure constitutive - physical, emotional, educational, social or prospective.

The tendency to overestimate their self-image of adolescents coming from single parent families can be explained by lower parental control or emotional investment in high single mothers in the child that they grow. The adolescent forms his body image, and the emotional image both in relation to others, but especially by reporting him more or less conscious to the parent with whom he lives. If this parent invests affection, trying to compensate for the absence of the other parent with praise and valorisation of his own child, then the child develops this positive self-image.

We recall that parental divorce is a crisis for the family and for children who are in this situation, however, studies show that family environment recovers, takes a new structure more stable, less confrontational than the first and more proper to child development.

The present study confirms this effect of stability of single parents by the lack of differences in the self-esteem formation of adolescence raised by a single mother face to those raised by both parents. Easily supraestimative scores available to adolescents in single-parent families may be due to self-control or an image of " strong and responsible child, " that they are required to show.

On the other hand, the values of self-esteem recorded by teenagers from two parent families, slightly lower than the others show a higher parental control, strained relations between teens and parents (recognized by the literature), perhaps the effort of a greater opposition of the child to both parents and the recognition of its own status in the family and therefore its greatest fears regarding the image he has in front of their parents and those around him.

**Hypothesis 3** – *The scores of teenagers coming from single parent families will differ significantly at personality factors tested with HSPQ Cattell personality questionnaire compared to adolescents from families with both parents.*

To check the differences between the groups means the standard notes of Personality Questionnaire for teenagers we have resorted to comparative statistical analysis of t-student type. The following table denoted t test values, the levels of its significance, and averages of the investigated subjects (see table 3).

Table 3. t test values, the levels of its significance, and averages of the investigated subjects for HSPQ

Personality factors	Test „t”	Significance threshold	<i>ASPF</i>	<i>ABP</i>
			Average	Average
<b>A Factor,</b> Schizotimie-cyclothymia	0.300	0.76 > 0.05	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.70</b>
<b>B Factor,</b> intelligence	0.556	0.58 > 0.05	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.82</b>
<b>C Factor,</b> ego strength	4.817	0.00 < 0.05	<b>7.80</b>	<b>5.52</b>
<b>D Factor,</b> phlegmatic-excitabile	-2.046	0.47 > 0.05	<b>2.51</b>	<b>3.67</b>
<b>E Factor,</b> submissive-dominant	-0.435	0.66 > 0.05	<b>7.37</b>	<b>7.15</b>
<b>F Factor,</b> taciturn-expansive	-1.858	0.70 > 0.05	<b>4.97</b>	<b>5.76</b>
<b>G Factor,</b> superego strength	5.087	0.00 < 0.05	<b>7.80</b>	<b>5.45</b>
<b>H Factor,</b> timidity - boldness	2.624	0.12 > 0.05	<b>8.03</b>	<b>7.15</b>
<b>I Factor,</b> hardness - sensitivity	-0.404	0.68 > 0.05	<b>5.97</b>	<b>6.18</b>
<b>J Factor,</b> collectivism - individualism	-4.405	0.00 > 0.05	<b>3.77</b>	<b>4.97</b>
<b>O Factor,</b> confidence - self-blame	0.542	0.59 > 0.05	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.45</b>
<b>Q2Factor,</b> conventional- nonconformist	-4.477	0.00 < 0.05	<b>1.54</b>	<b>3.48</b>
<b>Q3Factor,</b> weak sense of self - strong sense of self	-3.439	0.01 < 0.05	<b>3.60</b>	<b>5.18</b>
<b>Q4Factor,</b> relaxation tension	-2.251	0.28 > 0.005	<b>2.80</b>	<b>3.97</b>

We note that adolescents from single-parent families do not present significant differences in personality factors "schizotimie-cyclothymia," "intelligence," "excitability" factor E "submissive-dominant" and factor F, "taciturn - expansive". Also, no significant differences are observed between adolescents from families with both

parents and those from single parent families in terms of "timidity - boldness" (factor H), the "hardness - sensitivity" (factor I), "self-confidence – self blame"(factor O) and factor Q4 - " relaxation - tension ".

On the other hand, t test shows scores with significant differences in terms of following factors: "Ego strength" (C), "superego strength" (G), "collectivism - individualism" (J), "conventional - nonconformist "(Q2) and 'weak sense of self - strong sense of self" (Q3).

From this point of view we can look at the averages of both groups of subjects after the chart below, which will provide both the previously statistically demonstrated differences and the personality development profile of the two groups of subjects (figure 3).

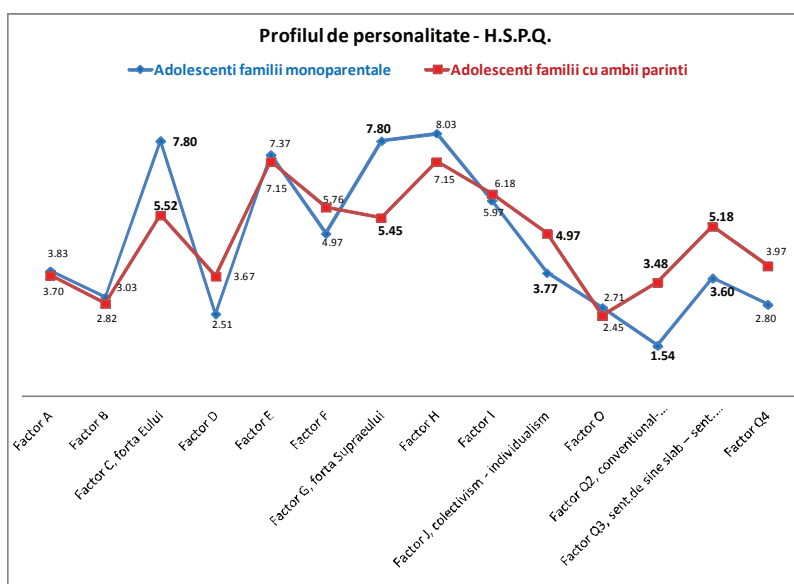


Figure 3. The statistically demonstrated differences and the personality development profile of the two groups of subjects

Imagining this personality profile of subjects samples, we see close to extreme note at the factors H, G and E (highs) and factors Q2, D, A and Q4 (notes low) to the adolescents come from single-parent families and to the factors E H (high notes with low influence on behavior, NS = 7.15) and for low notes to extreme at O and B factors in adolescents from families with both parents.

In other words, the teenagers come from single-parent families tend to be more adventurous, enterprising and sociable, with a rich emotional resonance, like teenagers from families with two parent, because in this case the two samples do not show statistically significant differences .

Factor G shows high values in adolescents coming from single parent families, they presenting themselves as conscientious, diligent, with the spirit of duty and responsibility versus their peers from families with both parents having a weaker development of the superego (NS = 5.45) but not in the extreme low. Analytically, we can only say that teenagers come from two parent families are less conscientious, with a much lower sense of duty and less preachy than others.

Both subjects samples are independent spirits, positives, sure of themselves, authoritarian, domineering and rather stubborn personality, the scale E of the HSPQ questionnaire is not registering significant differences between groups investigated (NS NS = 7.37 and = 7.15).

From the standpoint of ego strength (factor C), feature showing significant differences between the two samples, we see high values in adolescents from single parent families and mediumm grades from others. So the teenager raised by a single mother, divorcee is rather stable, with a good control of emotions, calm, realistic, with a strongly Self against adolescent from families with both parents having an emotional stability and a degree of realism more low. The self is not as strong and these children do not retain their composure as well as others.

Significant differences between samples was observed in J factor (collectivism vs. individualism) of the personality questionnaire, meaning greater influence of the group for adolescents from families with single parent (NS = 3.77) than those from families with both parents (NS = 4.97).

Another factor that showed significant differences was "conventionalism - nonconformity" (Q2) the averages of the lot of subjects from single parent families are at extreme low scale Q2 (NS = 1.54) compared to scores close to the average for others (NS = 3.48). Thus we can say that adolescents from single parent families are more dependent to the group without inner resources, distrustful of their own resources, compared to those in two parent families who are slightly more confident, rational, able to decide for themselves. But remember that Q2 factor relates mainly to career guidance and the less to the influence of the group, as is the case with factor J ("collectivism - individualism"). Data from the literature indicates correlation between low Q2 behavior with professions in the field of research, teaching leadership and decision generally with individuals who think more by themselves (Minulescu, 2007, p. 113).

Significant differences between the two groups of subjects appear to factor "weak sense of self vs. strong sense of self "(Q3). In this case, teenagers from families with both parents (NS = 5.18) are more controlled in terms of ethical norms accepted, wanting to do well, have



consideration for others, are cautious, and willing to control emotions expression. In literature researches, this factor presents a strong correlation with maintaining a proper self-image. We can interpret that teenagers coming from single parent families less respect the ethical standards and presents less considerate of others, notwithstanding their image to others (NS = 3.60).

Interpretive we can consider natural this location within ethical compliance and self control of the adolescents with both parents due to family structure and to a higher parental control for them. Problems that arises is whether this self-image suitable related to factor Q3 for the teenagers coming from two parent families and less appropriate for the others sample is "a mask" and whether this feature is more stable and real at the adolescents from single parent families and less stable and "extrinsic" to others.

Given that only at 5 of 14 factors are recorded significant differences between the two samples, we believe that the third hypothesis of the present research is not confirmed. So environment of single parent families do not differently influence the personality development of adolescents than for traits such as Ego strength, attachment to the group, the feeling of self-confidence and conformity to norms, factors at which teenagers coming from single parent families recorded higher scores.

Perhaps these higher scores on the factors referred above express just that "maturing", which is said in the common faith to be characteristic for the children from families with a single parent who rush the stabilization and the development of behavioral and personality traits to provide stability to the remaining parent or perhaps to create his self-control and to compensate for the lack of double parental control.

**Hypothesis 4** – *We suppose that adolescents from families with both parents present, on average, higher scores on emotional stability factors, expansion, maturity and emotional integration compared to the group of teenagers coming from single parent families.*

Although discussed in the previous scenario we made also this assumption to maximum use of Cattell personality questionnaire for adolescents and the stability factors defined by it. Literature research tool recognizes HSPQ. with a strong internal consistency, each personality factor can be used as a research tool itself, choosing only the items featured in each hand.

This fourth hypothesis is partially confirmed. Between the two groups of subjects there are significant differences between the two factors contained by the hypothesis (emotional stability - C and integration - Q3) and significant differences between the other two

factors mentioned (expansiveness - F and emotional maturity - I). But higher scores for adolescents in families with both parents is recorded only in Q3 factor (mean = 5.18 to 3.60), which means a higher degree of formalism and conformism thereof.

These scores determine also the trend of a conflict with himself, negligence of the requirements of social life of adolescents coming from single-parent families, which explain, on the other hand the increased trend for manifestation of delinquent and antisocial behavior to them..

**Hypothesis 5** – *We assume that scores of teenagers from families of parent intelligence factor personality questionnaire will be, on average, significantly lower than those from families with both parents.*

This hypothesis is not confirmed, meaning that the academic performance of adolescents from single parent families are not less than those from two parent families, the latter have not a higher level of intelligence. Both teenagers from single parent families (average factor B = 3.03) and those from families with both parents (mean factor B = 2.82) have concrete intelligence, similar to the stages of previous age, the preteen.

Characteristic of these low notes of factor B are "discreet" intelligence, a concrete thinking, the "spirit" slowness when it comes to understanding and learning, adolescents are "cumbersome" and inclined to a concrete and literal interpretation of the phenomena. This situation may be the reflection of inadequate training and education, says the literature ("R. B. Cattell personality test" – guid for users).

Interpretive we can say that teens in both groups investigated have not yet developed an ability to work with notions of increasingly abstract, to operate with symbols, to seize quickly the essential aspects of things and phenomena, to find solutions, that means an cognitive aptitude fully formed, they being in the process of acquiring this feature, a process that will last until the completion of compulsory education (up to support the baccalaureate, also known as "maturity test").

In conclusion, the first hypothesis of our study is not confirmed, meaning that teens come from single-parent families have a level of self-esteem lower compared with adolescents come from families with both parents, on the contrary, have a higher level of self-esteem.

On the other hand, the second hypothesis of the research, that the two categories of adolescents differ in the development of personality traits is half confirmed, registering five personality factors with statistically significant differences. In this case we can say that the variable "single parent" influence the development of personality traits in adolescents partly with reference to the ego force, moral integrity, the

ability to work in groups, preference for decisions taken collectively, dependence on social and the well known factor of neglecting the social norms (the tendency toward antisocial behavior often studied in the literature).

## **Conclusions**

Our research aims to examine whether adolescents from single parent families have a level of self-esteem lower than those in two parent families and whether these adolescents show significant differences in the development of personality traits. Adolescent self-esteem forms the background of the formation of personality traits, of a complete and consistent self-representations, with values and criteria from the part of the school and family, with specific rules to the social environment, the historical context, etc.

In view of the above observations, we started from the assumption that adolescents reared in single-parent families will present self-esteem deficit and a difference in the development of personality traits, this being due primarily to lack of rigorous parental control of meeting some fundamental emotional needs from the parents part who themselves go through a period of crisis.

Overall, our study did not confirm the hypothesis set and the assumption that adolescents from single parent families will present a level of self-esteem lower or a level of emotional maturity, of expansivity and integration lower, proved to be false. But the premise of the study was both the social perception that these children from single parent families have to suffer in their psychological development, and the literature reporting delinquent behavior and negative personality traits in adolescents raised by single parents.

Following this analysis we conclude that single-parent family does not adversely affect self-esteem and the development of personality traits of adolescents and that the factors of developing behavioral or personality disorders should be find in other area of adolescent life. In fact, single-parent families in the world and in Romania brings less economic resources, limited material resources for these children; the geographical location in defamed areas of town or isolated areas in terms of schooling are elements that can combine a disharmonic development of adolescents.

The present study showed mean values of self-esteem higher in adolescents coming from single parent families and averages higher in terms of strength ego, and conscientiousness, perseverance, responsibility and a high dependency to collective norms groups in occurrence. The explanations in this case can be explained by the high efforts of children

and single mothers to send these kids to school, to integrate them socially, to stabilize the new family structure, contribution efforts with their child. The adolescent from single parent family is more accountable, is appreciated properly by the single parent, receive all the affection and trust of that parent, because both "have to survive." And from these elements the adolescent from the single parent family tend to be more entrepreneurial and more sociable, to have a richer emotional resonance, a higher sense of duty and self-assurance.

The only element identified as being different - positive for the teenagers in two parent families and slightly negative for adolescents from single parent families - was the higher degree of formalism and conformism of the first. In other words, adolescents in single-parent families show less respect for the rules, are slightly rebellious, which is supported also by the literature which reports delinquent behaviors in these adolescents.

Although the research hypotheses have been disproved by statistics, this study achieved its objectives, for the application of valid tools for investigating psychological self-esteem and personality traits and confirmation or refutation of allegations of scientific literature data.

We believe that such research on single parents, on the psychological characteristics of members of this family are extremely important and would represent translations of the psychological research in contemporary, a relation of the techniques with the trend of the times. Let us remember that the psychologist, counselor, the clinician has to work with subjects who live in a social environment, that come to counseling with a socio-occupational baggage, especially with a family luggage, transgenerational and depending on it he will develop plans for the psychological intervention for each case.

The low number of subjects is one of the limits of this research A further study on the influence of single parents for teenager personality development is imposed on several levels: effects of single-parenting on the traits of personality of boys and girls, the correlation between parenting style adopted by a single mom and certain personality traits, beneficial or harmful relationship with the other parent in the extrafamilial environment on the adolescent's personality development.

## **References**

- Abreu, M., (2011), *Single Parent Homes Effect on Adolescent*, University of Florida
- Barber L.B., Eccles, S.J., (1992), *Long-Term Influence of Divorce and Single Parenting on Adolescent Family- and Work-Related Values, Behaviors, and Aspirations*, Pennsylvania State University

- Gavrila-Ardelean, M., (2015), (coord.), *Dezvoltarea competențelor de exprimare culturală a tinerilor / Development of cultural expression skills of youngs*, volum bilingv: română-englez, în colecția Biblioteca Dezvoltării Comunitare, Editura Școala Ardeleană, Cluj
- Gavrila-Ardelean, M., (2014), Study Type Determinants Deviant Behavioral Disorders In Teenagers From Different Residential Areas, *Revista Educația Plus*, Vol.10, Nr.1, Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu” Arad, 2014, ISSN: 1842-077X, pg. 232-238
- Golu, P., Verza, E., Zlate, M. (1995), *Psihologia copilului*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București
- Iluț, P., (2005), *Sociopsihologia și antropologia familiei*, Editura Polirom, Iași
- Minulescu, M.,(2000), *Psihodiagnoza moderna. Chestionarele de personalitate*, ediția a IV-a, editura Fundației “România de Măine”, București
- Zaharia A., (2012), *Aspecte psihosociale ale imaginii de sine și integrării sociale la adolescenți*, teză de doctorat, Universitatea București
- Zlate, M.,(2004), *Psihologie. Eul și personalitatea*, Editura Trei, București