ROMANIAN ACADEMY
School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy Institute of Philosophy and Psychology "Constantin Rădulescu-Motru"

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

IMAGINARY AND SYMBOLIC IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FATHERHOOD

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INTRODUCTION

Paternity is described, in the conditions of the multiple configurations in which we can find a man acting paternally (Schmitz, 2016), starting from the biological bond that exists or does not exist between a man and the child/children and from the parental involvement or commitment of a man that overlaps to a certain extent with maternal behavior. This description refers less to the psychological experience of being a father or to the intergenerational way in which the paternal experience is transmitted or to the relationship between fathers and sons (Brannen et al., 2011, Bjørnholt, 2010), being analyzed rather in relation to clinical aspects related to the mental health of fathers, especially with reference to paternal depression, anxiety and stress (Darwin et al., 2017, Garfield et al., 2014). In addition, we encounter only fragmentary concepts, attempts at conceptualization, and not a unified theory of fatherhood (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017), in a social context rather than regarding the subjectivity of men in the situation of being fathers. In addition, the historical association between the conceptualization of fatherhood and masculinity has become problematic in the sense that fatherhood is replaced by a neutral genital position, of co-parent, secondary to the maternal or equal one, compared to the asymmetrical relationship in the traditional patriarchal family (Klinth, 2008).

This research focused on the understanding of fatherhood as a *psychological construct*, which underlies the intrapsychic and intersubjective dynamic way in which the psychological experience of having had a father influences the identity experience of being a father. This dynamic was followed through the filter of the imaginary and symbolic aspects involved. The imaginary aspects refer to the dual father-son relationship, to the affective aspects or drives involved (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1994). The symbolic aspects derive from the social regulation of kinship relations (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1994), paternity being a supra-individual and culturally generated function, whose meaning and area of action concerns the intersubjectivity involved in the triadic structure of child, mother and father, and whose bearer is the real father who is challenged at the individual subjective level to integrate the requirements of this function.

In the Romanian literature it can be seen that there is no special interest in the psychology of paternity. With one exception (Luca, 2006), most of the published materials are focused on the description of parental roles, the father being almost absent (Popescu, 2010, Anghelescu & Iliescu, 2006, Negreanu & Ionescu, 2006), or translations of research done on populations other than the Romanian one or of foreign authors (Zoja, 2014). Thus, there is a need to expand the research on fatherhood both in the sense of a psychological perspective and in the situation of

fathers in Romania. In this sense, we propose that our research follows paternity in its psychological aspect on the Romanian male population, comparing the aspects of the experience they had in relation to their fathers with the experience they have as fathers for their sons.

The thesis consists of three parts and is structured in 11 chapters. The first part addresses contemporary theoretical approaches in psychology and the metapsychology of fatherhood. The second part includes chapters presenting similar studies, novelty elements and new research directions. The third part presents the studies conducted to investigate paternity as a filial relational experience.

In the first chapter, **Towards a psychological construct of paternity**, the theoretical perspectives of paternity as a social construct are presented, but also the perspective of developmental psychology.

In the second chapter, **Paternity, a psychodynamic psychological construct**, paternity is presented from a phenomenological perspective, as being related to the process of subjectivation and individuation, of presence and absence, these determining the existence of a "Father Hunger".

In the third chapter, **Imaginary and Symbolic**, the imaginary and symbolic aspects of paternity are presented, in the context of intergenerational transmission, and of a theory regarding paternal identity and function.

In chapter four, **Conclusions. Limits and new aspects in the research of the psychological construct of paternity**, the three important directions for a theory of paternity and their limits are presented, social/sociological perspective, that of developmental psychology and the phenomenological, psychoanalytic one.

In chapter five, **Studies on the psychology of paternity**, similar studies of retrospective evaluation of parenting styles are presented, studies that describe and analyze the experiences of having a father and being a father, but also studies that investigate the generational transmission involved in the experience of paternity.

In chapter six, **Novelty elements proposed by the present study and proposals by other correlative research directions**, proposals are formulated for the new research directions of paternity and the novelty elements assumed in this research.

In chapter seven, **Research Methodology**, the theoretical model of paternity as a filial relational experience resulting from the analysis of the research available to date, the research design, the general objectives and hypotheses of the research, and the presentation of the batches of research participants are presented.

In chapter eight, **Study 1: Imaginary and symbolic aspects that are transmitted in the family through direct filiation**, the objectives, hypotheses, variables, methods and participants of study 1 are highlighted. In addition, the adaptation and validation in Romanian of the Paternity Scale, FS-Ro, and the Father's relationship with his father Scale, FAF-Ro, is presented, and at the end the results of study 1.

In chapter nine, **Study 2: The father's representation of the grandfather's personality and interpersonal competences in the conditions of direct filiation**, the objectives, hypotheses, variables, methods and participants of study 2 are presented, and at the end the results of study 2.

In chapter ten, **Study 3: Development of an intervention strategy for improving and optimizing the deficient exercise of the paternal role**, several directions of psychological work and a particular type of setting in the case of fathers are proposed, as well as the elements of the intervention strategy, which is illustrated by two case studies.

In chapter eleven, **Conclusions and Final Discussions**, the final results, research contributions, research limits and future research directions are summarized.

The main novelty elements brought by the research in this thesis are:

(1) theoretical landmarks, some theoretical landmarks necessary to conceptualize a paternal identity and function and to bring back to the fore the problem of the experience of paternity.

(2) clinical, by creating the hypothetical model of paternity in which the personality, interpersonal style and masculinity/femininity of the paternal grandfather tend to influence the personality, interpersonal style and masculinity/femininity of the father, as part of the processes of identification/disidentification/coidentification regarding the way of exercising the role, in the form of a paternal involvement and identity representation that can continue the behavioral pattern of the grandfather or can compensate.

(3) by proposing an intervention strategy to improve and optimize the deficient exercise of the paternal role.

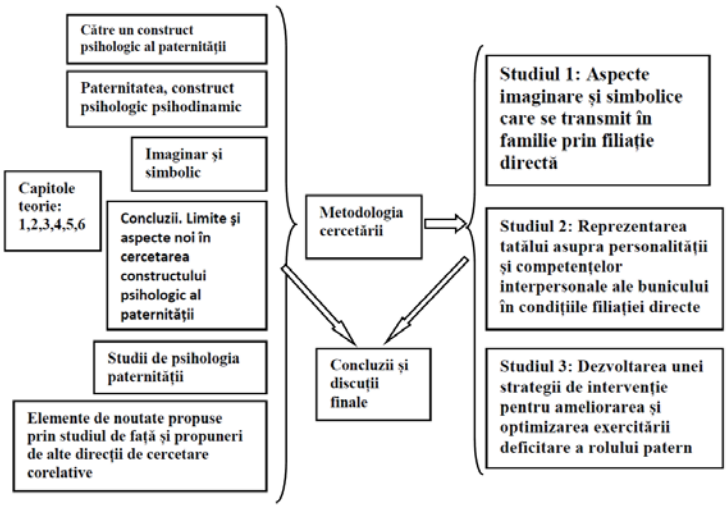


Figure 1. Structure of the doctoral thesis

Keywords: imaginary, symbolic, paternity, filial relationship, paternal function, generational transmission, masculinity.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this thesis, the research of the paternal experience was carried out from three important directions: a. from a social/sociological perspective, b. one of developmental psychology and c. a phenomenological clinical one, mainly psychoanalytic.

As a social construct, the father is associated with a socioculturally fixed role-status, with a position continuously negotiated through interactional processes but also with the learning of behavior patterns. Although this role-status has historically been associated with the theme of masculinity, nevertheless the criticism of hegemonic masculinity has led to a reevaluation of this relationship and to the reformulation of the paternal role as a neutral genital one, of co-parent, secondary to the maternal role.

The perspective of developmental psychology remains tributary to the social construct of paternity, but it is oriented rather to highlight the result of father-child interactions and what are the specific behaviors of fathers within them. Research in developmental psychology is oriented towards the dyadic mother-child relationship, but does not include fathers' behavior or highlight its specific effects on child development.

The clinical, psychoanalytic perspective offers the possibility of formulating a psychological construct of paternity because it summarizes and focuses on the aspects neglected by the other two perspectives. However, the diversity of concepts and theoretical frameworks, the great emphasis on casuistry and the qualitative aspects of the research, require a synthetic effort

complemented by the requirement of empirical validation of the phenomena described. Moreover, although the psychoanalytic literature speaks extensively about the father and how he appears in relation to the psyche, the father appears to be associated with the traditional family system and too little in the new family contexts. Another limitation of the psychoanalytic perspective is that it is phallocentric, its discourse being ordered primarily by the gender difference, masculine/feminine, to the advantage of the masculine.

As far as the research of paternity psychology in Romania is concerned, it is too little represented, as there is no significant information regarding the situation of Romanian fathers, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Our basic assumption is that the father is a psychological construct of a son for whom the experience of having a father involves two aspects, two facets. The first facet is that the father has an obligatory aspect, that he has to be in some way non-personal, symbolic, in the form of a function, the paternal function. The second facet is the father as an object of his child's desire, in the form of the imaginary. Between these two facets there is a tension that excludes and at the same time brings them closer, they tend to evolve simultaneously, and are due to generational transmission, this transmission being mediated by the direct filiation and sex of the child.

This means that a discourse on paternity must start from a phenomenological description of the experience of being a father and of having had a father, a description that implies an experiential contact between father and son due to filiation, but also from socio-cultural elements that shape this subjective experience (see Figure 1.1.)

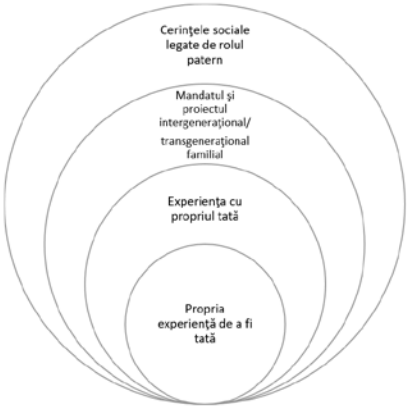


Figure. 1.1. The phenomenological elements constituting the psychological construction of paternity

Psychologically, the fact of becoming a father implies a different approach than that of motherhood. The experience of becoming a father lacks the way of massive psychological, physical and hormonal change involved in motherhood, through which the mother relates to the child in her mind, the fantasized child, and to the one in her body (Trowell, 2005). The father, because his bodily contribution is minimal, only by donating the genetic material, is left to face his own expectations, fears and fantasies, and not the real or fantasized child. Under these conditions, the man is intrapsychically confronted with a reevaluation of his masculinity and the need to identify with his own father who causes him anger, rejection or guilt (Trowell, 2005). This inner experience can be spoken of as the experience of an *inner father* (Krampe, 2003), the composite result of a process of mental representation that brings together the image of a symbolic father, a personal father and an introjected father, or in his terms (Watson-Phillips, 2017) of an intrapsychic phenomenon called *Myson/Myself*. In both cases, the effect of the experience of having/having had a father on the experience of being a father is brought to the fore.

CHAPTER II. OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

2.1. The theoretical model of paternity as a filial relational experience

Based on the available research so far it is possible to formulate a theoretical model of paternity as a filial relational experience. The father is a son of a father, who can remember and describe the experience of having a father because he has introjected an *inner father* based on the filial relationship (Krampe, 2003). This *inner father* is part of a dynamic co-identification process through which the father identifies with his son, *Myson/Myself*, which allows the father to develop relationally in the role of parent (Watson-Phillips, 2016, Watson-Phillips, 2017).

The personality, interpersonal style and masculinity/femininity of the paternal grandfather tend to influence the personality, interpersonal style and masculinity/femininity of the father, as part of the processes of identification/disidentification/coidentification regarding the way of exercising the role, in the form of a paternal involvement and identity representation that can continue the grandfather's behavioral pattern or compensate for it (see Figure 2.1).

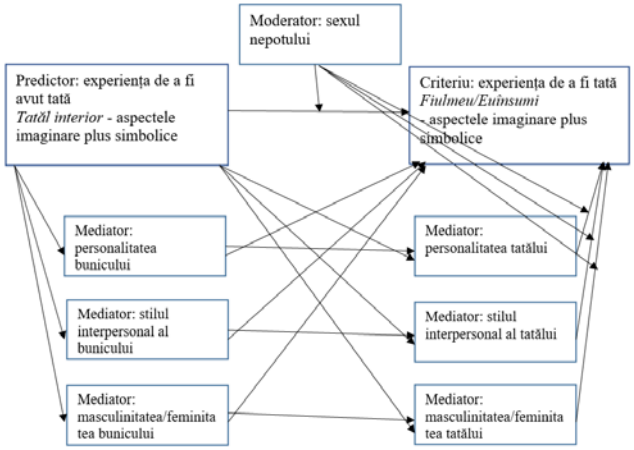


Figure. 2.1. The total effect with the moderation of filiation and the mediation of personality, interpersonal style and masculinity/femininity in the case of grandfather and father.

2.2. Research design

This research had a descriptive-exploratory design that allowed the evaluation of the paternal conduct of the fathers involved in the research. Second, the research was a correlative one, in an effort to highlight how the experience of having a father influences the experience of being a father. The data collection was carried out using an online platform to obtain as much data as possible, and to face the challenges during the pandemic.

2.3. General objectives and hypotheses of the research

In this paper we aimed to see if there is a continuity of the paternal model, and at the same time, we were interested in the way in which the psychological experience of paternity is constructed, taking into account the fact that we will have access to two different generational perspectives, both retrospective and prospective.

According to the model proposed, we consider that the experience of being a father is dependent on the experience of having a father, under the influence of personality traits, gender characteristics, style of interpersonal relationships, and sex of the child, under the conditions of filiation.

The experience of having and being a father is described by:

1. imaginary aspects that refer to the subjective, personal and relational experience of having a "good" father, positively involved: affective availability, communicational availability, action partner, support when needed, responsible, or "bad", negatively involved: the punitive and violent father.

2. symbolic aspects involved in the role of being a father, which synthesize the socio-cultural requirements related to the role: the moral function, the provider function, the function of the gender model, the androgynous function.

The experience of having and being a father is influenced by:

a. personality type, extraversion/intraversion and neuroticism,
b. characteristics of masculinity, femininity or androgenicity of the father
c. the style of interpersonal relationships.
d. the sex of the child.

The research had the following objectives, namely:

1. Investigating the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic in terms of paternity
2. Examining the effect that fathers' relationship with their own fathers has on their psychological experience of their relationship with their sons up to the age of 18 in Romania.
3. Development of an intervention strategy to improve and optimize fathers' experience of exercising the paternal role

Objective 1: It started from the premise that being a father implies a form of particular psychological experience transmitted generationally that involves identifications/disidentifications/coidentifications with a paternal model that includes on the one hand imaginary aspects, related to the father-son relationship, but also symbolic ones, related to the supraindividual, social requirements related to the general role of father.

In the case of investigating the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic in terms of fatherhood, the question arises: whether the imaginary, personal and relational aspect of fatherhood modifies the symbolic, formal, role-playing one, at the individual and generational level.

For this objective we set out to verify:

Hypothesis 1: Imaginary and symbolic aspects influence each other at the level of the individual experience of fatherhood.

Hypothesis 2: The child's sexual identity influences the way the father represents and enters into the paternal role.

Hypothesis 3: Positive and negative imaginary aspects of grandfatherrents tend to determine positive and negative imaginary aspects of fathers in generational transmission.

Hypothesis 4: The symbolic aspects of paternity in the case of grandfatherrents influence the symbolic aspects of paternity in fathers, in the context of filiation.

Objective 2: In the case of examining the effect that the relationship of fathers with their own fathers has on their psychological experience in the relationship with their sons up to the age of 18 in Romania, the question arises whether these effects alone explain the way in which a man enters into a paternal role or are there other factors, that belong to the paternal grandfather and/or father, such as personality type, interpersonal style or masculinity/femininity. In addition, it is important to note whether the sex of the child determines the variation of the paternal behavior and whether it varies in the sense of prolongation or compensation.

In order to achieve this objective, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Paternal identity and conduct vary depending on the personality traits, interpersonal style, and gender traits of the father.

Hypothesis 2: The father's self-image varies depending on the grandfather's personality traits and gender traits.

Hypothesis 3: Fathers' interpersonal competences are determined by the representation of grandfatherrents' interpersonal competences.

Hypothesis 4: The psychological experience of having a father influences the experience of being a father with the mediation of other factors such as personality type, interpersonal style or the degree to which a father perceives himself as masculine/feminine.

Objective 3: The development of an intervention strategy to improve and optimise fathers' experience of paternity is based on the assumption that fathers' behaviour and identity can be influenced in a remedial way. The intervention strategy we have proposed addresses the problems that arise from the exercise of the paternal role, namely: paternal dysfunctional model taken from own father or grandfather who promotes a paternal role far from the child or with a punitive-violent aspect, deficient identity process in the area of masculinity and neurotic personal characteristics, and an interpersonal style that goes in the dominant direction or submissiveness without affective warmth.

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH

3.1. Study 1. Imaginary and symbolic aspects that are transmitted in the family through direct filiation

Introduction

According to the model proposed, the experience of having and being a father is described by:

1. imaginary aspects that refer to the subjective, personal and relational experience of having a "good" father, positively involved: affective availability, communicational availability, action partner, support when needed, responsible, or "bad", negatively involved: the punitive and violent father.
2. symbolic aspects involved in the role of being a father, which synthesize the socio-cultural requirements related to the role: the moral function, the provider function, the function of the gender model, the androgynous function.

We believe that the experience of being a father is dependent on the experience of having a father. In order to examine the way in which the imaginary and symbolic aspects of the representation of fatherhood are transmitted in the family to the new generations of men in the paternal role, three types of data were compared and analyzed as they appear in the representation of fathers: firstly how they had their father's experience, secondly how this father presented the grandfather from the perspective of the paternal role, and thirdly, how the current fathers represent themselves cast in the paternal role. The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic in terms of paternity. This means examining the ways in which the imaginary and symbolic aspects of the grandfather's representation influence the representations that the father projects in relation to his own children.

Instruments

The instruments used to verify the four hypotheses are "Scala Paternității", Fatherhood Scale, FS-Ro, adapted and validated in Romanian according to *Fatherhood Scale* (Dick, 2004), and "Scala relaţiei tatălui cu propriul tată", The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale, validated and adapted in Romanian according to the FAF subscale, "Father's Relationship with Own Father", from the Intergenerational Family Influences scale, within *The Father Presence Questionnaire* instrument (FPQ), an instrument developed by E. M. Krampe and R. R. Newton (Krampe & Newton, 2006). These were administered through Google Form, on 153 subjects in 2019.

Participants

The participants in this study were fathers from groups of parents from several schools and high schools, from public and private education, co-opted through the head teachers during the classes, and from the online environment, from different facebook groups: groups for the support of parents in general, groups for the support of family fathers, groups for the support of divorced fathers, groups for people with sexuality other than heterosexual. The selection criterion was initially men from urban areas who have at least one biological male child aged up to 18 years, later the fathers of girls were also admitted.

As for the age of the respondents (N= 153), those under 30 years old accounted for 7.8%, those between 30-39 years old 40.5%, those between 40-50 years old 43.1%, and over 50 years old 8.5%. Their vast majority declared themselves as coming from families with a married father, 94.8%, and only 1.3% as a partner of a consensual couple, the rest with a divorced or separated father. 54.9% of the respondents declared themselves to have a good material condition, very good only 15%, average 28.1%, and 2% precarious. Most of the fathers participating in the research (N=153) have higher education: university 39.2%, master's degree 38.6%, and doctorate 11.1%, but there are also respondents with only high school, 6.5%, vocational school, 3.9% or only elementary school, 0.7%. Most of them declared themselves to be heterosexual, 95.4%, one with a homosexual gender identity, 0.7%, and with a trans identity, 3.9%. Although 71.2% declared themselves to be employed, 24.2% are self-employed, 2% are unemployed, 1.3% are retired and 1.3% are unemployed.

Procedure

The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale, the Fatherhood Scale and a variation of the Fatherhood Scale reformulated to describe fathers' current experience were applied to them, representing for the purpose of this research the generation 1, G1. They were questioned about how they remember their relationship with their own fathers, the previous generation, G2 or grandfatherrents, taking into account the real events that took place, their perceptions of them, what they felt about them, but also their emotional responsiveness. At the same time, they were questioned about how the great-grandfatherrents, G3, were presented by the grandfatherrents, G2. In order to test the hypothesis of generational transmission, a mirror adaptation of the Fatherhood Scale was used, the items being formulated in the present tense, in relation to the experience that the respondents have as fathers. In order to measure whether there is a difference between the transmission of paternal experience in the conditions in which a father has boys or girls, two scales have been formulated according to this criterion. The responding

fathers were divided into two groups, fathers of boys or those who also have girls (N=105) and fathers of girls (N=40).

Data analysis

The study involved the use of descriptive, inferential, and correlational statistics. The data processing of this research was carried out using the SPSS program version 23.0, and JASP version 0.18.1.

In order to analyze the data and verify the research hypotheses, the following statistical procedures were performed: statistical tests to compare means, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and network analysis.

First, considering that during the realization of this research a translated version into Romanian of the Fatherhood Scale and The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale was not identified, they were translated and adapted into Romanian, respecting the APA standards (Gudmundsson, 2009) and cultural differences (Borsa et al., 2012). The adaptation of both instruments into Romanian was carried out by the method of experts, and subsequently, the Romanian versions were revised by a philologist, and were translated into English, obtaining a form very close to the original one. The Romanian versions were called *the Paternity Scale*, abbreviated *FS-Ro,* and The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale, abbreviated *FAF-Ro*.

Regarding the reliability analysis, for the Romanian version of *the Paternity Scale*, within this research it was not possible to achieve test-retest reliability for obvious reasons, in the conditions of not performing two repeated measurements, with the same instrument, of the same people, nor parallel forms reliability, because there is no test adapted and validated on the Romanian population that is different and considered equivalent to the scale. In this research, the split-half reliability method was used for reliability analysis, referring to the degree of agreement between the partial scores, obtained by dividing the test items in two, and the internal consistency method, which refers to the degree of agreement between the answers to the test items.

In the split-half reliability procedure, for N=32a and N=32b, a Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient was .89, the Spearman-Brown Coefficient being .94.

The internal-consistency method, in the inter-item correlation matrix, the situations of items with a high coefficient of over 0.8, which seem to measure the same thing in a redundant way, and of those with inter-item correlations below 0.2 and which modify the Cronbach Alpha

coefficient of the scale (.97) were analyzed. As a result of this analysis, 15 items were eliminated from the final scale. As for the Cronbach alpha reliability estimates of the scale, .97, it is one above the threshold necessary in the case of applying in selection contexts, .90, not only to compare the behavior and characteristics of the subjects in two groups (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

In order to identify the latent specific factors in case of applying the scale to the Romanian population and a possible restriction of the number of factors, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was initially performed and then an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) by manually extracting 9 factors based on the correlation matrix, with promax oblique rotation, factoring method being minimum rank, (Chi-Square, $\chi^2 = 7911.285$; $p < 0.001$; degrees of freedom, df = 1653; $\chi^2/df = 4.786$; *Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation*, RMSEA = 0.043 (90% CI: 0.036-0.05); *Comparative Fit Index*, CFI = 0.951; *Tucker-Lewis Index*, TLI = 0.919, *Standardized Square Root Mean Residual* SRMR = 0.025). 48 items of the 64 items of the original scale, *The Fatherhood Scale* (Dick, 2004), have been preserved. The nine factors were named taking into account the two aspects, imaginary and symbolic, and the variables that are load by them: the father available affectively and communicatively, the father helping in need, the father as an action partner, the father responsible for schooling, the function of provider, the function of the gender model, the moral function, the androgynous function, the punitive and violent father. Thus, for the available affective and communicational father factor, the factor analysis was continued, by manually extracting two factors based on the correlation matrix, with promax oblique rotation, the factoring method being minimally residual, under the conditions of a fit model with an RMSEA of 0.08, SRMR 0.02, TLI 0.95 and CFI 0.97. The affective and communicational available father factor was segmented into two variables, namely the communicationally available father and the affectively available father.

Thus, a number of 10 subscales were obtained, nine associated with the positive paternal involvement dimension: the affectively available father, the communicational available father, the help in need father, the action partner father, the father responsible for schooling, the provider function, the gender model function, the moral-value function, the androgynous function, and one associated with the negative paternal involvement factor: the punitive and violent father.

As for the verification of validity**,** it was carried out in the following ways:

(a) content validity by analyzing the representativeness of the items for what the scale wants to measure, the items covering the important aspects of the field of paternity psychology, but also that they are proportional in the test to the importance and size of

each aspect. In this research, the empirical confirmation of the previous theoretical analyses takes place, evident in the factors extracted and retained within the factor analysis.

(b) As far as the construct or conceptual validity of the Fatherhood Scale is concerned, we can consider both a convergent and a discriminative validity. Convergent validity refers to the degree to which either the subscale and subscale scores, or the items in their composition, being theoretically similar, have high correlation coefficients (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The validity of discrimination refers to the ability of the scale to evaluate something other than the other tests regarding the construct measured together. In the absence of other similar instruments, the validity of discrimination can be interpreted as a weak correlation between subscales and items that appear to measure factors that are not theoretically similar (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). The analysis of the Spearman correlation coefficients showed that most of the subscales correlate medium to strong with each other but also with the scale, having coefficients above 0.3, under statistically significant conditions (sig. 0.01 and 0.001). The subscale of the violent and punitive father tends to correlate the weakest with those of positive paternal involvement, and the subscales of symbolic aspects tend to be too little related to each other, which can be interpreted as evidence for discriminatory validity (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

Regarding the reliability analysis, for the Romanian version of the scale "The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale", abbreviated *FAF-Ro*, the split-half reliability procedure was used, referring to the degree of concordance between the partial scores, obtained by dividing the test items in two and the internal-consistency method. In the split-half reliability procedure, for N=7a and N=6b, a Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient was obtained between the two forms of .76, the Spearman-Brown index being .869. Regarding the internal-consistency procedure, the analysis of the correlation of the items with the final score showed that there are 4 items with a coefficient greater than 0.8 in the inter-item correlation matrix, without any items with indices lower than 0.2. The factor analysis was performed by the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method with an extraction based on eigen values greater than 1, and varimax rotation (KMO = 0.923, $p < .001$) and indicated that we can speak of the extraction of two factors, one with an eigen coefficient of 7.439, responsible for approximately 57% of the variation, and a second with an Eigen value of 2.110, of about 16% of the variation, namely the positive involvement of the paternal grandfather and the negative involvement of the paternal grandfather.

Regarding the validity verification, the construct validity was evaluated, both from the perspective of convergent and discriminant validity. The analysis of the Spearman correlation coefficients between the two subscales and the scale showed that the subscale of positive involvement strongly correlates with the scale, coefficient of .97, under statistically significant conditions (sig. 0.01), and that of negative involvement, correlates medium, .53. Regarding the inter-item correlations, the inter-item correlation matrix shows that the items of the positive involvement scale correlate moderately to strongly with each other, the items of the negative involvement scale having low correlation coefficients.

Results

As regards the descriptive analysis, the normality condition of the data was verified by the graphical analysis of the histograms and the calculation of the asymmetry and skewness indicators, see Table 3.1. Their compliance was verified against the values provided in the literature (Brown & Green, 2006; Blanca et al., 2012).

Table 3.1. Results of descriptive statistics for the The Father's Relationship with His Own Father Scale, FAF-Ro, Fatherhood Scale, FS-Ro, and Fatherhood Scale, FS-Ro, mirrored to describe the father's own paternal behavior participating in the research

Scale	Număr respondenți	Media	SEM (Std. Error of Mean)	Abaterea standard	Indicatorul de asimetrie	Indicatorul de boltire	Plaja scorurilor minime și maxime	Coeficient Cronbach alpha
FAF-Ro (străbunic)	136	44.051	1.029	12.006	-0.138 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.208	-0.743 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.413	15-65	0.499
FS-Ro (bunic)	153	126.928	2.805	34.700	0.196 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.196	-0.504 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.390	47-213	0.879
FS-Ro formulată în oglindă (tatăl respondent)	94 (tată respondenți care au doar copii de sex masculin)	190.957	2.406	23.329	-1.762 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.249	4.667 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.493	85-225	0.869

For **hypothesis 1**, according to which at the level of individual experience, there is a correspondence between the imaginary and symbolic aspects of fatherhood, in the conditions of filiation, the situation of the relationship between imaginary and symbolic aspects was initially analyzed at the level of fathers and then at the level of grandfatherrents.

The correlational analysis showed that both at the level of fathers, generation G1, and at the level of grandfatherrents, generation G2, significant correlations between predictors were highlighted, between imaginary and symbolic aspects we have strong, significant links with $p < .001$, as can be seen in Table 3.2. and Table 3.3.

Table 3.2. – Analysis of the correlations between imaginary and symbolic aspects, measured with the Fatherhood

Scale reformulated in the mirror to describe the father's own paternal behavior participating in the research

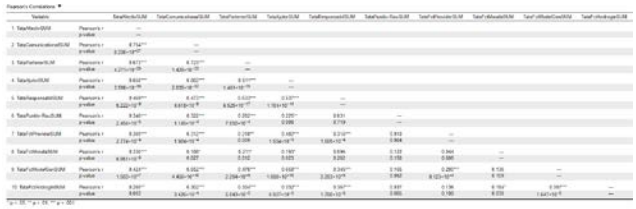
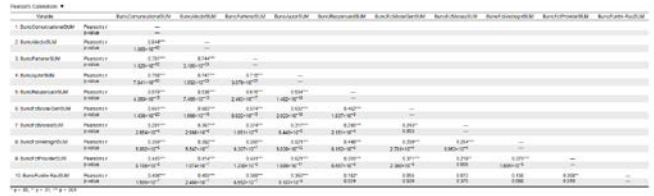


Table 3.3. Analysis of the correlations between imaginary and symbolic aspects, measured with the Fatherhood Scale which describes paternal behavior at the level of grandfatherrents.



Regression analysis showed that the influence goes only in one direction, depending on the temporal antecedent, or the imaginary aspects generate/determine the symbolic aspects, or vice versa.

In the case of grandfatherrents:

-63% of the variation in symbolic aspects, in the case of the grandfather, the G2 generation, (moral grandfather, provider grandfather, gender model grandfather and androgynous grandfather), is due to imaginary aspects (the grandfather available affectively, the grandfather available communicationally, the grandfather as an action partner, the grandfather as a support when needed, the grandfather responsible, and the grandfather punitive and violent), R^2=0.636, F=42.443, p <.001. Or 61% if we refer to the imaginary aspects without the variable punitive and violent grandfather, $R^2 = 0.614$, $F = 46.845$, $p < .001$.

-55% of the variation in the imaginary aspects (the grandfather available affectively, the grandfather available communicatively, the grandfather as an action partner, the grandfather as a support in need, the grandfather responsible, and the grandfather as punitive and violent), is due to the symbolic aspects (the moral grandfather, the grandfather provider, the grandfather as a gender model and the androgynous grandfather), R^2=0.553, F=45.685, p <.001. Or 63% of the variation in imaginary aspects without the variable punitive and violent grandfather, comes from the influence of symbolic aspects, R^2=0.633, F=63.878, p <.001.

In the case of fathers:

-49% of the variation in symbolic aspects (moral father, provider father, gender model father and androgynous father), is due to imaginary aspects (affective available father, communicational available father, action partner father, support father in need, responsible

father, and punitive and violent father), R^2=0.491, F=19.764, p <.001. Or 48% of the variation of the symbolic aspects remains unchanged if we refer to the imaginary aspects without the variable punitive and violent father, R^2=0.488, F=23.813, p <.001.

-48% of the variation in imaginary aspects (affectively available father, communicationally available father, action partner father, support father in need, responsible father, and punitive and violent father), is due to symbolic aspects (moral father, provider father, gender model father and androgynous father), R^2=0.488, F=29.728, p <.001. Or 34% of their variation, without the variable punitive and violent father, comes from the influence of symbolic aspects, R^2=0.342, F=17.186, p <.001.

Network analysis, in the case of fathers, shows us an undirected and weighted network with 10 nodes. The network analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.1. The variable with the most important position in the network is the helper father node (*B*= 2.57), followed by the affectively available father and the communicationally available father, who have the same average position in intermediating communication with the other variables in the network (*B*= 0.514). All three variables have a central position, the helping father *C*= 1.445; the emotionally available father *C=0.950, and the communicationally available father C=0.841, along with them being the action partner father C*= 0.966. Of these four variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the helping father (*S=1.304) followed by the communicationally available father (S*= 1.002), the emotionally available father (*S*= 0.938) and the action partner father (*S=0.903).* In addition to these, a significant but weak influence is held by the responsible father (*S*= 0.048). It is observed that the other variables are nodes equally distant from the center of the network (*C*= -0.514), and as an influence on the network in descending order: moral-symbolic father (*S*= -1.447), punitive father (*S*= -1.238), androgynous father (*S*= -0.800), provider father (*S*= -0.554), and gender model father (*S*= -0.156). These five variables have an expected negative influence on the other variables.

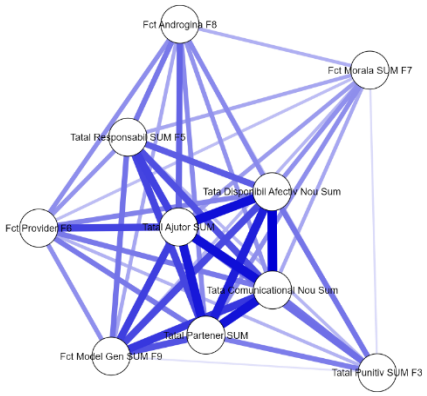


Fig. 3.1. Network analysis of the imaginary and symbolic aspects of how the responding fathers represent their

paternal experience

In the case of grandfatherrents, the network analysis also presents us with an undirected and weighted network with 10 nodes. The network analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.2. The variables with the most important position in the network are the help grandfather node (*B*= 1.76) and the communicatively available grandfather (*B*= 1.76), followed by the affectively available grandfather with an average position in the intermediation of communication with the other variables in the network (*B*= 0.588). All three variables have a central position (the helping grandfather *C* = 1.241; the grandfather emotionally available 0.999, and the grandfather communicatively available *0.892)* next to them being the grandfather action partner *(C* = 1.024). Of these four variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the helping grandfather (*S*= 1.154) followed by the communicative available grandfather (*S*= 1.007), the affectively available grandfather (*S*= 0.941) and the action partner grandfather (*S*= 0.915). In addition to these, a significant but weak influence is held by the responsible grandfather (*S*= 0.116). It is observed that the other variables are nodes equally distant from the center of the network (*C*= -0.588), and as an influence on the network in descending order: the punitive grandfather (*S*= -1.551), the moral grandfather (*S*= -1.344), the androgynous grandfather (*S*= -0.700), the provider grandfather (*S*= -0.462), and the gender model grandfather (*S*= -0.076). These five variables have an expected negative influence on the other variables.

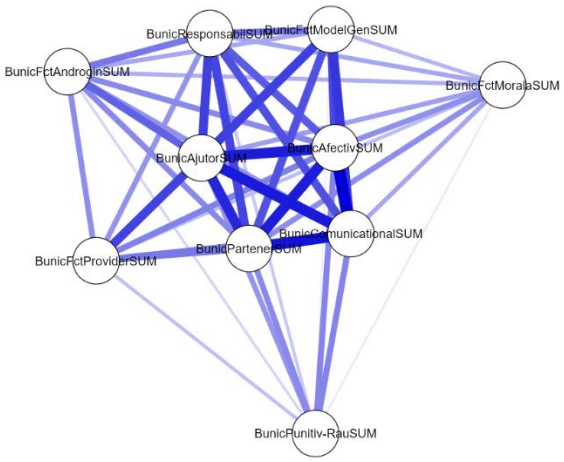


Figure 3.2. Network analysis of imaginary and symbolic aspects of how responding fathers recall their experience with their own father

For **hypothesis 2**, namely if the child's sexual identity seems to influence the way the father

represents himself and assumes the paternal role, a descriptive analysis of the responses of fathers of boys, fathers of girls and fathers who have children of both sexes was initially conducted (see Table 3.4.).

Table 3.4. Results of descriptive statistics for the subscales of the Fatherhood Scale, FS-Ro, and the Fatherhood Scale, FS-Ro, mirrored to describe the paternal behavior of fathers who have only male children, at least one male child, and those who have only female children.

Scale	Număr respondenți	Media	SEM (Std. Error of Mean)	Abaterea standard	Indicatorul de asimetrie	Indicatorul de boltire	Plaja scorurilor minime și maxime	Coeficient Cronbach alpha
FS-Ro (bunic)	153 tați respondenți	126.928	2.805	34.700	0.196 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.196	-0.504 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.390	47-213	0.879
FS-Ro formulată în oglindă (tatăl respondent)	94 (tată respondenți care au doar copii de sex masculin sau cel puțin un copil de sex masculin)	190.957	2.406	23.329	-1.762 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.249	4.667 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.493	85-225	0.869
	36 (tată respondenți care au doar copii de sex feminin)	198.556	2.873	17.237	-0.729 (Std. Error of Skewness: 0.393	0.372 (Std. Error of Kurtosis: 0.768	151-227	0.755

Because testing the normal distribution with Shapiro-Wilk showed that the two groups of fathers of boys and fathers of girls do not have a normal distribution (p = . 211), we will use the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney t-test. The results (U = 899,000, Effect Size = -0.194, p = 0.110) do not demonstrate a statistical difference between the groups of fathers of boys, regardless of whether we considered exclusively those with male children or those with at least one male child, and the group of fathers of girls.

In order to validate **hypothesis 3**, namely that the positive and negative imaginary aspects of grandfatherrents are consistent with the positive and negative imaginary aspects of fathers in generational transmission, we will use correlational analysis and network analysis as statistical procedures.

The correlation analysis showed that significant correlations were found between the predictors on each level, that of fathers, generation G1, grandfatherrents (G2) and great-grandfatherrents (G3), with strong links, significant with $p < .001$, but without having significant correlations between the three generations. With one exception, the correlation between the bad great-grandfather (G3) and the punitive-bad grandfather (G2), ($r = .367$, $p < .001$), as can be seen in Table 3.5.

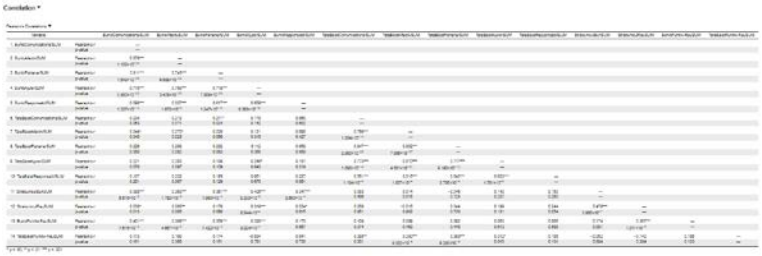


Table 3.5. Analysis of the correlations between imaginary aspects in the case of fathers, grandfatherrents, and great-grandfatherrents.

The network analysis shows us an undirected and weighted network with 14 nodes, see Figure 3.3. The network analysis continues the results of the correlational analysis, and shows the nodes tend to group separately, the variables related to the experience of being a father (G1) are grouped separately from those of the experience of having a father (G2 and G3). The network analysis shows that the variable with the most important position in the network is the node of the communicatively available grandfather (*B*= 1.93), followed by the action partner grandfather (*B*= 1.43), the affectively available grandfather and the father responsible for schooling (*B*= 0.93), and the helper in need (*B*= 0.43).

Four variables share their central position, namely the communicative available grandfather (*C*= 1.45), the affectively available grandfather (*C*= 1.29), the action partner grandfather (*C*= 1.26) and the helpful grandfather in need (*C*= 0.868). And more distant are the emotionally available father (*C*= 0.239), the communicationally available father (*C*= 0.217) and the grandfather responsible for schooling (*C*= 0.063).

Of the variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the communicatively available grandfather (*S*= 1.34), the affectively available grandfather (*S*= 1.10) and the action partner grandfather (*S*= 1.05). With a lesser influence, we have the following nodes: the grandfather who helps in need (*S*= 0.710), the father who is available in communication (*S*= 0.471), the father who helps in need (*S*= 0.45), the father who is an action partner (*S*= 0.40) and the father who is emotionally available (*S*= 0.31). The nodes with the greatest expected influence are: the communicationally available grandfather (EI=1.292), the affectively available grandfather (EI=1.07), the action partner grandfather (EI=1.03). A lower expected influence is had by the grandfather who helps in need (EI=0.65), the father who is available in communication (EI=0.50), the father who helps in need (EI= 0.48), the father who is an action partner (EI= 0.366) and the father who is emotionally available (EI= 0.33). The most distant nodes from the center of the network are: the punitive and violent father (C= -1.79), the punitive and violent grandfather (C= -1.13), the good great-grandfather (C= -1.06), the bad great-grandfather (C= -0.99), the father responsible for schooling (C= -0.29), the father

who is an action partner (C= -0.08) and the father who helps in need (C= -0.02). As a negative influence on the network we have the following nodes: the punitive and violent father (*S*= -1.58), the bad great-grandfather (*S*= -1.44), the punitive and violent grandfather (*S*= -1.36), the good great-grandfather (*S*= -1.06), the grandfather responsible for schooling (*S*= -0.23) and the father responsible for schooling (*S*= -0.16).

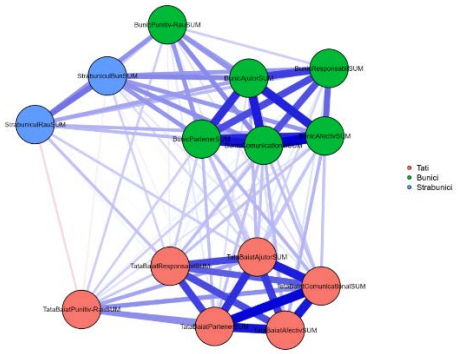


Figure. 3.3. Network analysis of imaginary aspects in the case of fathers and grandfathers

For **hypothesis 4**, namely that the symbolic aspects of paternity in the case of grandfatherrents influence the symbolic aspects of paternity in fathers, in the context of filiation, we used correlational analysis and network analysis as statistical procedures.

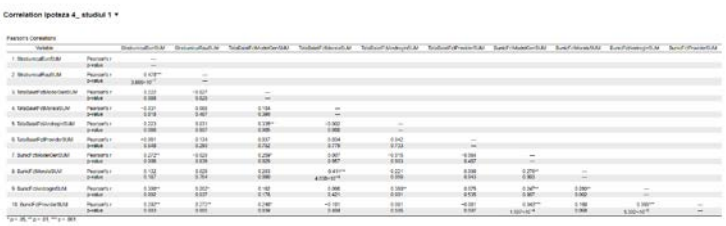
Statistical results showed medium and strong power links, statistically significant for p <.05, p <.01, and p <.001, see Table 3.6., between:

-the good great-grandfather and the bad great-grandfather, the gender model grandfather, the provider grandfather and the androgynous grandfather; -the bad great-grandfather, the provider grandfather and the androgynous grandfather;

-the moral grandfather and the moral father;

-the androgynous grandfather and the androgynous father.

Table 3.6. Analysis of the correlations between symbolic aspects in the case of fathers, grandfatherrents, and great-grandfatherrents.



The network analysis shows us an undirected and weighted network with 10 nodes, see Figure 3.4. The variable with the most important position in the network is the moral grandfather node

(*B=1.83)*, followed by the androgynous grandfather *(B=1.15)*, the good great-grandfather *(B=0.81)*, and the bad great-grandfather *(B*= 0.47).

The only variable with a central position is the androgynous grandfather (C 1.04), followed by the good great-grandfather (C 0.80), the provider father (C 0.69), the gender model grandfather (C 0.63), and the androgynous father (C 0.21).

Among the variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the androgynous grandfather (*S*= 1.30), followed by the good great-grandfather (*S*= 1.10), the provider grandfather (*S*= 0.82), the moral symbolic grandfather (*S*= 0.39), the gender model father (*S*= 0.12). The node with the greatest expected influence is the androgynous grandfather (EI=1.384), followed by the good great-grandfather (EI=0.872), the moral grandfather (EI=0.607), the provider grandfather (EI=0.418), and the gender model father (EI=0.298).

It is observed that the provider father node (C= -2.240) is the furthest from the center of the network, followed by the moral father (C= -1.145) and the moral grandfather (C= -0.024). As a negative influence on the network we have the following nodes: the provider father (*S*= -1.84), the moral father (*S*= -1.25), the bad great-grandfather (*S*= -0.43), the androgynous father (*S*= -0.27).

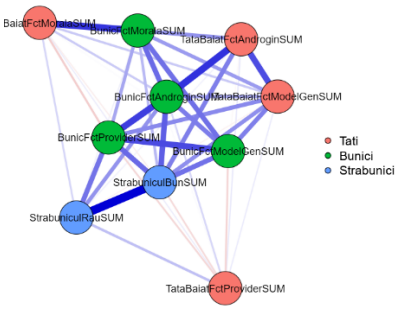


Figure. 3.4. Network analysis of imaginary aspects in fathers and grandfathers

Discussions and conclusions

The majority of father respondents, 83.5%, reported their own parenting experience as positively involved fathers, while 9.8% said they were involved at an average level in relation to maximum paternal performance.

The hypothesis that the imaginary aspects are influenced by the symbolic ones as an expression of the subjectivity implied by the father-son interpersonal relationships versus the formal

expression of supra-individual imposed requirements was accepted. We can say that, as can be seen that from the two network analyses, the experience of paternity refers rather to the representation of a father who is emotionally available, relationally and communicatively available, but also an action partner, and less to a moral, punitive father, who functions as an extension of the mother, only for the financial well-being of the family, or just as a model. In other words, it is necessary to re-evaluate the psychodynamically inspired hypothesis according to which the imaginary and symbolic aspects differ radically, and the one referring to the father as rather a function with a fundamental role in the formation of the individual psyche and civilization, from the perspective of the substantial presence of a father (Freeman, 2008).

Also, the hypothesis that the child's sexual identity seems to significantly influence the way the father represents and enters the paternal role was rejected. However, we can speak of a generational transmission because the positive and negative imaginary aspects of grandfatherrents tend to determine the positive and negative imaginary aspects of fathers, but around the characteristics of communicational and affective availability, of being a partner for action and help in need. The same goes for the symbolic aspects of the androgynous aspect, the moral-value function, the present experience of being a father being under the sign of a sensitivity regarding the requirements of the paternal role that distances the father from the child, such as the function of provider.

3.2. Study 2. The father's representation of the grandfather's personality and interpersonal competences in the conditions of direct filiation

Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine the effect that fathers' relationship with their own fathers has on their psychological experience of their relationship with their sons up to the age of 18 in Romania. This involved analyzing how the personality and interpersonal competence of the grandfatherrents determine the personality and interpersonal competences of the fathers, and whether the sex of the child mediates this determination. The representation of personality was described by the following variables: extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity, femininity, and interpersonal competences by the following variables, which are part of the Interpersonal Circumplex Scale: arrogant-calculated, glacial, aloof-introverted, unassured-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, warm-agreeable, gregarious-extraverted, assured-dominant. Positive paternal competences or "positive paternal involvement" were described in the form of the

affectively available father, the communicative available father, the action partner father, the support father in need, the father responsible for schooling, and the negative paternal competences or "negative paternal involvement" in the form of the punitive and violent father. As for the representation of symbolic functions, we have: the moral father, the provider father, the father of the gender model and the androgynous father.

Instruments

The instruments used to verify the four hypotheses were the following scales with IPIP items: extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity, femininity, the Interpersonal Circumplex Scale, and the Fatherhood Scale, for grandfatherrents, i.e. the G2 generation, and the mirror-reformulated Fatherhood Scale for the responding fathers, i.e. G1, through Google Form, on a number of 114 participants in 2023. The interpersonal circumplex is essentially a two-dimensional representation of interpersonal space, which is composed of interpersonal needs, values, problems, traits related to interpersonal transactions, and in which the set of variables is theoretically organized as a circle, shown in Figure 3.5.

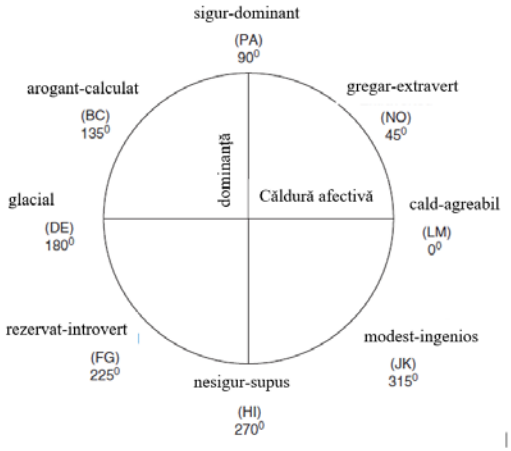


Figure 3.5. The Interpersonal Circumplex (Wiggins, 1979)

This circle comprises two orthogonal axes, a vertical axis of status, dominance, power, ambition, assertiveness, or control, and a horizontal axis of goodwill, compassion, care, solidarity, friendship, affiliation, or emotional warmth. Depending on these, we can speak of a division into 8 circle segments, or octants, in the form of the following variables: arrogant-calculated (BC), glacial (De), aloof-introverted (FG), unassured-submissive (HI), unassuming-ingenuous (JK), warm-agreeable (LM), gregarious-extravert (NO), assured-dominant (PA).

Participants

The participants in this study were fathers from the groups of parents from several schools and

high schools, from public and private education, co-opted by the tutors during the tutoring classes, and from the online environment, from different facebook groups: groups for the support of parents in general, groups for the support of family fathers, groups for the support of divorced fathers, groups for people with sexuality other than heterosexual. The selection criterion was initially men from urban areas who have at least one biological male child up to the age of 18. As for the age of the respondents (N= 114), those under 30 years old accounted for 1.8%, those between 30-39 years old 29.8%, those between 40-50 years old 60.5%, and over 50 years old 7.9%.

From the perspective of marital status, fathers declared that they were married, 81.6%, divorced 10.5%, in a consensual couple 5.3%, separated 1.8%, and only 0.9 unmarried. Their vast majority declared themselves as coming from families with a married father, 93.9%, with a divorced father, 4.4%, only 0.9% as a partner of a consensual couple and 0.9% with a widowed father. Regarding the material situation, 54.4% of the respondents declared themselves to have a good material condition, only 21% very good, average 24.6%. They stated that their fathers had a good material situation of only 25.4%, average 54.4%, poor 11.4%, very good only 6.1%, and 2.6% did not know. Most of the fathers participating in the research have higher education: college 50.9%, master's degree 30.7%, high school 10.5%, doctorate 6.1%, but there are also respondents with only vocational school, 1.8%. They said their fathers had higher education: college 30.7%, high school 29.8%, vocational school 28.1%, elementary school 5.3%, master's degree only 4.4%, and 1.8% did not respond. Most of them declared themselves to be heterosexual, 98.2%. Regarding economic status, 75.4% of respondents declared themselves to be employees, 24.6% self-employed. They stated that 94.7% of their fathers were employed, and only 3.4% were self-employed.

Procedure

Participants in this study were given the Fatherhood Scale on how they remember their relationship with their own fathers, the previous generation, G2 or grandfatherrents, taking into account the real events that took place, their perceptions of them, what they felt about them, but also their emotional responsiveness. In addition, they were asked about how they perceived the personality of their fathers, the previous generation, G2 or grandfatherrents, and about their interpersonal characteristics. The fathers, G1, responded to a mirror-reformulated form of the Fatherhood Scale and to scales of extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity, femininity, the Interpersonal Circumplex Scale, to allow them to talk about their experience in the paternal

role, but also about their personality and interpersonal style.

Data analysis

The study involved the use of descriptive, inferential, and correlational statistics. The data processing of this research was carried out using SPSS version 23.0, and JASP version 0.18.3. In order to analyze the data and verify the research hypotheses, the following statistical procedures were performed: correlation analysis, regression analysis, mediation analysis and network analysis. The normality condition of the data was verified by graphical analysis of histograms and calculation of asymmetry and vault indicators. Their compliance was verified against the values provided in the literature (Brown & Green, 2006; Blanca et al., 2012).

Results

For **hypothesis 1**, according to which paternal identity and conduct vary according to the personality traits, interpersonal style, and gender traits of the father, we used correlational analysis and network analysis.

Following **the correlational analysis** (see Table 3.7.) it is found that there is a moderate, statistically significant correlation in terms of the father's masculinity and the function of gender model and the communicationally available father, but also between the agreeable warm interrelational aspect, LM, and the communicationally available father, the helping father, the affectively available father, the action partner father and the father as a moral function. We have weak but statistically significant links between masculinity and androgynous father, provider father, partner father, helper father. The same goes for extraversion and the communicatively available father, the affectively available father, the partner father, and a negative but weak influence between neuroticism and the communicationally available father. We also have weak but statistically significant links between the warm agreeable interrelational aspect and the father responsible for schooling, the gender model father, the androgynous father, but also between the gregarious extrovert interrelational aspect and the communicationally available father, the affectively available father, the partner father and the gender model father.

Table 3.7. Table of statistically significant correlations between personality traits, masculinity/femininity and interpersonal characteristics and imaginary and symbolic aspects in the case of fathers

Masculinitate tată	Tata model de gen r = 0.341 pt p< .001
	Tata comunicational r =0.304 la p<.01
	Tata partener r = 0.266 pt p<.01
	Tata provider r = 0.263 pt p<.001
	Tata androgin r = 0.257 pt p< .001
	Tatal ajutor r = 0.249 pt p<.05
Extraversie tată	Tata comunicational r = 0.267 pt p<.01
	Tata afectiv r = 0.228 pt p<.05
	Tata partener r = 0.198 pt p<.05
Nevrotism tată	Tata comunicational r = -0,227 pt p<.05
Tată cald agreabil, LM	Tata comunicational r = 0.466 pt p<.001
	Tata ajutor r = 0.463 pt p<.001
	Tata afectiv r = 0.383 pt p<.001
	Tata partener r = 0.363 pt p<.001
	Tata moral r = 0.360 pt p<.001
	Tata model de gen r = 0.283 pt p<.01
	Tata responsabil r = 0.238 pt p<.05
	Tata androgin r = 0.192 pt p<.05
Tată gregar extravert, NO	Tata afectiv r = 0.227 pt p<.05
	Tata comunicational r = 0.224 pt p<.05
	Tata partener r = 0.221 pt p<.05
	Tata model de gen r = 0.218 pt p<.05

The network analysis shows us an undirected and weighted network with 22 nodes. The network analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.6. The network analysis continues the results of the correlational analysis, and shows that the node with the most important position is the warm/agreeable father octant, (*B*= 3.24), followed by the communicationally available father node (*B*= 1.66), the father's masculinity (*B*= 1.24), the gregarious/extroverted father, (*B*= 0.93) and, less importantly, the confident-dominant father node, (*B*= 0.41).

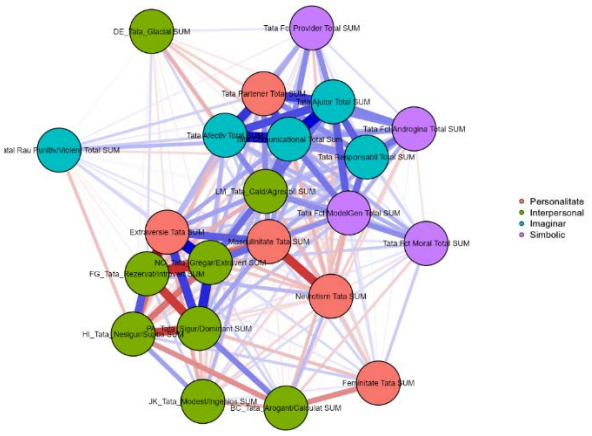


Figure 3.6. Network analysis of imaginary and symbolic aspects, extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity, femininity, and arrogant-calculated, glacial, aloof-introverted, unassured-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, warm-agreeable, gregarious-extraverted, assured-dominant octants, in the case of fathers.

Four variables share their central position within the network, namely: the warm/agreeable father (C= 1.51), the communicationally available father (C= 1.19), the gregarious/extroverted father (C= 1.18) and the father's masculinity (C= 1.06). The nodes that move away from the

center of the network, in descending order are: father extroversion (C= 0.95), helping father (C= 0.88), emotionally available father (C= 0.60), reserved/introverted father, FG, (C= 0.57), partner father (C= 0.54), confident-dominant father (C= 0.37). Among the variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the communicationally available father (*S*= 1.44), father extroversion (*S*= 1.12), gregarious/extrovert father (*S*= 1.08). They are followed by the nodes of the warm/agreeable father (*S*= 0.95), the helping father (*S*= 0.87), the masculinity of the father (*S*= 0.81), the emotionally available father (*S*= 0.77), the partner father (*S*= 0.69), the reserved/introverted father (*S*= 0.69). The furthest nodes from the center of the network are: the father's femininity (C=0.74) and the father's neuroticism (*C*= -0.63), and, with the same *C*= -0.74, the icy father and the modest/resourceful father, the paternal functions, the moral father, the androgynous father, the provider father, but also the punitive/violent father.

To validate **hypothesis 2**, according to which the father's self-image varies according to the personality traits and gender traits of the grandfather, correlation analysis, regression analysis and network analysis were used as statistical procedures.

Of the answers given to the extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity and femininity scales, both fathers and grandfatherrents tend to describe themselves in a fairly high proportion as having a high level of extraversion, 24% of respondents, a low level of neuroticism, 27% of respondents, a high level of masculinity, 30% of respondents, and with a fairly high level of femininity, 18%.

The correlational analysis (see Table 3.8.) showed that we can speak of strong and statistically significant correlations between:

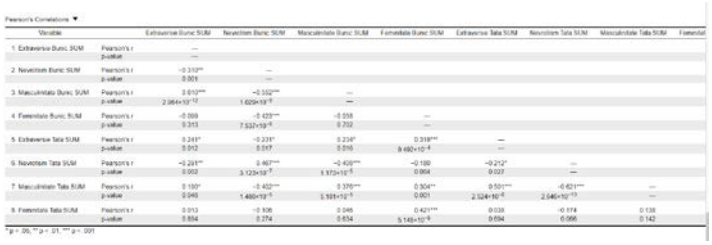
-The grandfather's extraversion correlates at a medium level with the father's extraversion (r= 0.241, p<.05), while it correlates positively strongly with the grandfather's masculinity (r= 0.610, for p<.001), but medium with the father's masculinity (r= 0.190, p<.05), and negatively with the grandfather's neuroticism (r= -0.310, p<.01) and weakly with the father's neuroticism (r= -0.291, p< .01).

-The grandfather's neuroticism correlates strongly positively with the father's neuroticism (r= 0.467, p<.001), and negatively strongly with the grandfather's masculinity (r= -0.552, p<.001), with the grandfather's femininity (r= -0.423, p<.001) and the father's masculinity (r= -0.402, p<.001), and moderately with the father's extraversion (r= -0.231, p<.05).

-The grandfather's masculinity correlates positively with the father's masculinity (r= 0.376, p<.001), and negatively with the father's neuroticism (r= -0.408, p<.001).

-The grandfather's femininity correlates positively with the father's femininity (r= 0.421, p<.001), but also with the father's extraversion (r= 0.318, p<.001) and the father's masculinity (r= 0.304, p<.01).

Table 3.8. Table of statistically significant correlations between personality traits, masculinity, femininity and interpersonal characteristics and imaginary and symbolic aspects in the case of fathers and grandfathers.



The results **of the regression analysis** show that the percentage of variation in the case of the father's neuroticism on the part of the grandfather's neuroticism is 21% (R^2=0.21, F=29.804, p <.001). The father's masculinity is explained by the grandfather's masculinity in a proportion of 14% (R^2=0.14, F=17.776, p <.001). The father's femininity is explained by the grandfather's femininity in a proportion of 17% (R^2=0.17, F=23.053, p <.001). In the case of the variation of the father's extraversion, the grandfather's extraversion does not explain it statistically significantly.

The network analysis shows us an undirected and weighted network with 8 nodes (see Figure 3.7.). The nodes with the most important position in the network, both with the same value *B*= 1.58, are grandfather neuroticism and grandfather femininity. The grandfather neuroticism node has a central position within the network, C= 1.14, followed by male masculinity (*C*= 0.93), and more distantly, male neuroticism (*C*= 0.48) and grandfather masculinity (*C*= 0.45). Among the variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is male masculinity (*S*= 1.03) and grandfather neuroticism (*S*= 0.91), and less significant, male neuroticism (*S*= 0.68) and grandfather masculinity (*S*= 0.52). The farthest nodes from the center of the network are four, all of which have the same C-0.68 value: male extroversion, male neuroticism, male femininity, and grandfather extroversion. As a negative influence on the network, the node with the highest power is male femininity (*S*= -1.97), and with a much lower power, grandfather extraversion (*S*= -0.41), grandfather femininity (*S* = -0.39) and male extroversion (*S* = -0.36).

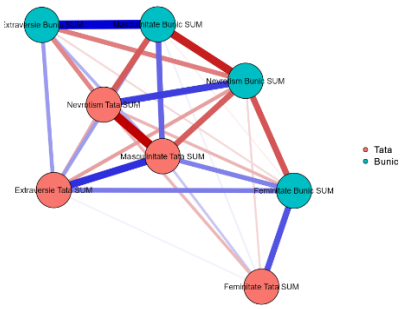
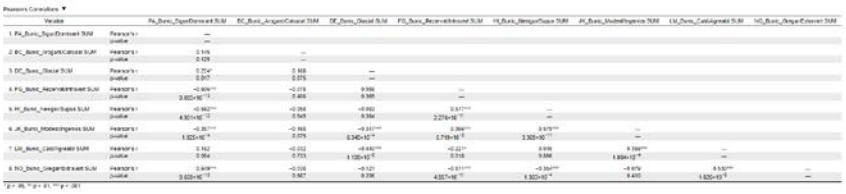


Figure 3.7. Network analysis of extraversion, neuroticism, masculinity, femininity, and octane in the case of fathers and grandfathers.

In order to validate **hypothesis 3,** according to which fathers' interpersonal competences are determined by the representation of grandfatherrents' interpersonal competences, we applied statistical procedures such as correlation analysis, regression analysis and network analysis.

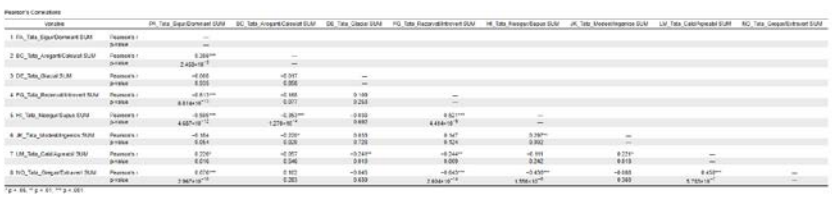
The correlational analysis showed that one can speak of strong and statistically significant correlations between the octants, both between those in the circumplex referring to grandfatherrents, and between those in the circumplex referring to fathers, and between the octants of the two circumplexes. The situation of the correlations between the octants in the circumplex referring to grandfatherrents, according to Table 3.9. shows us that we have expected negative and strong correlations between the opposite octants, the glacial grandfather with the agreeable/warm grandfather (r= -.440, p<.001), but also the unassured-submissive grandfather with the confident-dominant grandfather (r= -.592, p<.001), on the diagonal of the aloof-introverted grandfather with the gregarious/extraverted grandfather (r=-.571 p<.001), and on the axis of dominance between the highest octave of domination and the octants in the submissive zone: the assured-dominant grandfather and the aloof-introverted grandfather (r= -.606, p< .001), the unassured-submissive grandfather (r= -.592 p< .001), the unassuming-ingenuous/resourceful grandfather (r= -.357 p< .001). We also have statistically significant negative expected correlations on the affiliation axis, between the maximum point of affective coldness, the glacial grandfather and the unassuming-ingenuous grandfather (r= - .317 p<. 001), but also between the reserved/introverted grandfather and the confident/dominant grandfather (r=-.606 p< .001), and the pleasant/warm grandfather (r= -.221 p<.05).

Table. 3.9. Table of statistically significant correlations between the octants in the circumplex referring to grandfatherrents: arrogant-calculated, glacial, aloof-introverted, unassured-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, warm-agreeable, gregarious-extraverted, assured-dominant.



The situation of the correlations between the octants in the circumplex referring to fathers, according to Table 3.10, shows that the largest, statistically significant negative correlations were obtained between the opposite octants. Regarding the requirement of positive correlations between adjacent octants, there is only one exception, namely the glacial/distant grandfather who does not statistically significantly correlate positively with adjacent octants. Among the results obtained in the correlational analysis it appeared that two variables, the arrogant-calculated grandfather and the arrogant-calculated father have the same value of r = 1, and in order to avoid the situation of multicollinearity (Montgomery, 2012) (Montgomery, 2012), we will retain from the two, only the octant arrogant-calculated grandfather. The situation of the correlations between the octants in the circumplex referring to fathers shows us that we have negative expected correlations between the opposite octants, the glacial father with the agreeable-warm father (r=-.241 p< .01), but also the unassured-submissive father with a secure-dominant father (r= -.595, p< .001), on the diagonal of the reserved-introverted father with the gregarious-extravert father (r= -.643, p< .001), But also between the secure-dominant father and the reserved-introverted father (r= -.613, p< .001), the reserved-introverted father and the agreeable-warm father (r= -.244, p< .01), the unassured-submissive father and the arrogant-calculated father (r= -.353 p< .001), the unassured-submissive father and the gregarious-extraverted father (r= -.436, p< .001).

Table 3.10. Table of statistically significant correlations between the octants in the circumplex referring to grandfathers: arrogant-calculated, glacial, aloof-introverted, unassured-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, warm-agreeable, gregarious-extraverted, assured-dominant.



Regarding the situation of intercorrelations between the octants of the interpersonal circumplex of the grandfathers and the octants of the interpersonal circumplex of the fathers, according to Table 3.11. we have medium and weak positive correlations in the direction of dominance and

affective warmth: the confident/dominant grandfather and the confident/dominant father (r=.235 p< .05), the gregarious/extravert/intrusive grandfather and the gregarious/extravert/intrusive father (r=.277 p< .01), the agreeable/warm/self-sacrificing grandfather and the confident-dominant father (r=.196 p< .05), and medium and weak negative correlations in the direction of submission and affective coldness: the reserved/introverted/socially inhibited/reserved father in society and the agreeable/warm/self-sacrificing grandfather (r=-.257 p<.01), the reserved/introverted/socially inhibited/reserved grandfather in society and the agreeable/warm/self-sacrificing father (r=-.258 p<.01), the modest/resourceful/exploitable/too conciliatory grandfather and the agreeable/warm/self-sacrificing father (r=-.202 p< .05), the modest/resourceful/exploitable/too conciliatory father and the agreeable/warm/self-sacrificing grandfather (r=-.191 p< .05), the modest/resourceful/exploitable/too conciliatory father and the arrogant/calculated grandfather (r= -.220, p< .05). We have an interesting positive mean correlation between the modest/resourceful/exploitable/overly conciliatory father and the glacial/distant grandfather (r=-.241 p<.01) which can be explained by the compensation hypothesis, namely that men who have undergone poor parenting tend to compensate by the way they exercise their role as parents (Floyd & Morman, 2000, Floyd & Morman, 2003, Odenweller et al., 2013)tag.

Table 3.11. Table of statistically significant correlations between the octants of the interpersonal circumplex of grandfatherrents and the octants of the interpersonal circumplex of fathers.

Regression analysis shows that we cannot explain the variation for any octant of the interpersonal circumplex in the case of fathers with octants of the interpersonal circumplex relative to grandfatherrents.

The network analysis presents us with an undirected and weighted network with 15 nodes (see Figure 3.8.).

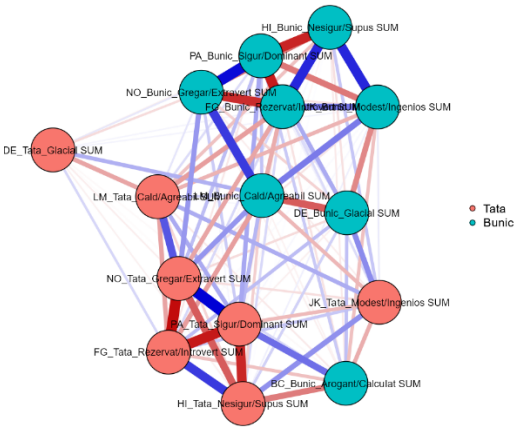


Figure. 3.8. Network analysis of the octans of the interpersonal circumplex of grandfatherrents and the octans of the interpersonal circumplex of fathers.

The node with the most important position in the network is the gregarious/extroverted father (*B=2.93),* followed by the confident-dominant father (*B*= 1.06), and then, with the same value *B*= 0.50, the warm/agreeable grandfather and the glacial grandfather, in other words the pole of dominance and majority of affective warmth. The variable with the central position within the network is the gregarious/extroverted father (C= 1.58), followed by the warm/agreeable grandfather (C=.973), the confident-dominant father (C=.721), the gregarious/extroverted grandfather (C=.577), the confident-dominant grandfather (C=.515), the reserved/introverted father (C= .445), the reserved/introverted grandfather (C= .307). We have the same central location of the dimension of control and domination, towards the pole of affective warmth, with the observation that within the network, the father and the reserved/introverted grandfather tend to be nodes closer to this situation. Among the variables, the greatest significant influence on the other variables in the network is the gregarious/extroverted father (*S*= 1.286), the octant that meets the maximum of dominance and affective warmth in the case of the father. This is followed by the octant of domination and control for both the grandfather (*S*= 0.992) and the father (*S*= 0.951), but also by the reserved/introverted/socially inhibited octant for both the grandfather (*S*= 0.870) and the father (*S*= 0.671). Less influential are the nodes: the gregarious/extravert grandfather (*S*= 0.522) and the warm/agreeable grandfather (*S*= 0.358). The farthest nodes from the center of the network are the glacial father (C= -2.566), the arrogant/calculated grandfather (C= -1.221) and the modest/resourceful father (C= -0.921). As a negative influence on the network, the node with the highest power is the glacial father (*S*=-2.499) and much less influential is the same octant but in the case of the grandfather (*S*=-0.500), followed by the arrogant/calculated grandfather (*S*=-1.110) and the modest/resourceful father (*S*=- 0.974), i.e. the grandfather who is characterized by the maximum of dominance and

affective coldness and the father who is characterized by the maximum of submission and affective warmth.

Results on the interpersonal circumplex scales for both grandfathers and fathers, shown in Figure 3.9. tend to be similar, most respondents described their father retrospectively and described themselves in the area of the warm/agreeable octant, followed by the gregarious/extrovert, and reserved/introverted.

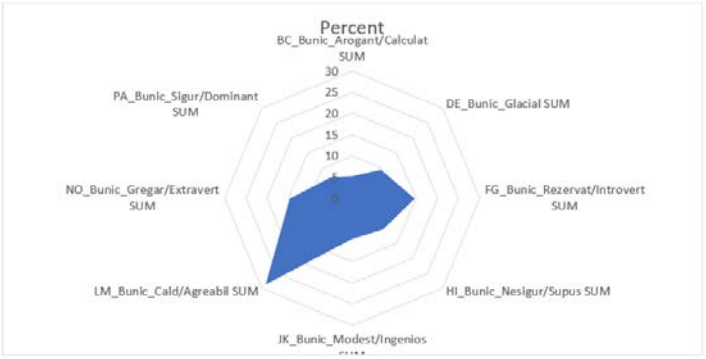


Figure 3.9. Results on interpersonal circumplex scales for both grandfathers and fathers.

For **hypothesis 4**, namely that the psychological experience of having a father influences the experience of being a father with the mediation of other factors such as personality type, interpersonal style or the degree to which a father perceives himself as masculine/feminine, we used regression analysis and mediation analysis as statistical procedures.

Mediation analysis investigates whether and to what extent the effect of a variable X on of the Y variable is explained by the M variable. The theoretical model of mediation is shown in Figure 3.10. The arrows indicate effects: τ is the direct effect of X on Y, and $\alpha \cdot \beta$ is called the indirect effect. The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect effect: the mediation analysis decomposes an existing effect into these two terms.

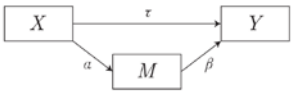


Figure 3.10. Theoretical model of mediation

Five mediation analyses were carried out:

1. the first having as a mediator the effect of the experience of having a father on the experience of being a father,
2. the second having as mediator the type of the grandfather's personality and the degree to which he was perceived as masculine/feminine,
3. the personality type of the responding father and the degree to which he perceives himself as masculine/feminine,

4. the interpersonal characteristics of the grandfather,

5. the interpersonal characteristics of the father.

These five mediation analyses were preceded by a regression analysis (see Table 3.12.) which showed that we can speak of a direct effect that the experience of paternity in the case of the grandfather has on the experience of paternity in the case of the father, R^2=0.132, F=13.648, p <.001.

Table. 3.12. Regression model and ANOVA variation analysis in the case of paternity experience in the case of the grandfather on the father's paternity experience.

Rezumatul modelului	Modelul în raport cu ipoteza nulă	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	RMSE	Model H1	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
experiența paternității bunic> experiența paternității tată	H_0 H_1	0.000 0.363	0.000 0.132	0.000 0.122	34.295 32.134	Regression Residual Total	14093.449 92935.508 107028.957	1 90 91	14093.449 1032.617	13.648	0.001

The first mediation analysis showed that we can speak of a statistically significant direct effect of the variable describing the experience of having a father on the variable describing the experience of being a father (see Table 3.13.). The direct effect estimate is 0.144, with a standard error of 0.055 and a z-value of 2.603 (p = 0.009). The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.021 to 0.260.

Table 3.13. The direct effect that the experience of having a father has (the experience of paternity in the case of the grandfather) in relation to the experience of being a father (the experience of paternity in the case of the father).

						95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper
Experiența de a avea tată (Experiența paternității în cazul bunicului)	→ Experiența de a fi tată (Experiența paternității în cazul tatălui)	0.144	0.055	2.603	0.009	0.021	0.260

Note. Delta method standard errors, bias-corrected percentile bootstrap confidence intervals, ML estimator.

Regarding the direct effects, the statistically significant results, obtained by *delta method standard errors, bias-corrected percentile bootstrap confidence intervals, ML estimator*. revealed the following data:

1. We can speak of a significant positive effect of the grandfather's gender model function on the father's affective availability. The direct effect estimate is 0.221, with a standard error of 0.110 and a z-value of 2.012 (p = 0.044), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.006 to 0.436.
2. We can speak of a significant negative effect of the punitive/violent grandfather on the father's responsibility with schooling, on the androgynous aspect, but of a positive effect

on the punitive/violent father. For the father's responsibility for schooling, the direct effect estimate is -0.239, with a standard error of 0.077 and a z-value of -3.102 (p = 0.002), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.390 to -0.088. For the androgynous aspect of the father, the direct effect estimate is -0.122, with a standard error of 0.061 and a z-value of -1.987 (p = 0.047), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.242 to -0.002. For the punitive/violent father, the direct effect estimate is 0.172, with a standard error of 0.057 and a z-value of 3.045 (p = 0.002), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.061 to 0.283.

3. We can talk about a significant negative effect of the grandfather partner in activities on the moral and value aspect of the father. The direct effect estimate is -0.313, with a standard error of 0.144 and a z-value of -2.180 (p = 0.029), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.595 to -0.032.
4. We can speak of a significant positive effect of the grandfather's moral value function on the moral value aspect of the father, but also on the punitive/violent father. For the moral value aspect of the father, the direct effect estimate is 0.332, with a standard error of 0.096 and a z-value of 3.453 (p<.001), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.144 to 0.521. For the punitive/violent father, the direct effect estimate is 0.157, with a standard error of 0.068 and a z-value of 2.309 (p = 0.021), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.024 to 0.290
5. We can talk about a significant positive effect of the grandfather's androgynous function on the father's androgynous appearance, but a significant negative effect on his moral function. For the androgynous aspect of the father, the direct effect estimate is 0.280, with a standard error of 0.089 and a z-value of 3.153 (p = 0.002), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.106 to 0.455. For the moral value aspect of the father, the direct effect estimate is -0.282, with a standard error of 0.119 and a z-value of -2.374 (p = 0.018), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.515 to -0.049.
6. We can talk about a significant negative effect of the grandfather helping in need on the androgynous appearance of the father. The direct effect estimate is -0.168, with a standard error of 0.076 and a z-value of -2.219 (p = 0.026), and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.316 to -0.020.

The second mediation analysis showed that in terms of indirect effects, their analysis showed that certain traits of the grandfather, mediated by other traits, can influence the father's perceptions and behaviors, namely:

1. The femininity of the grandfather mediates the significant direct effect between the grandfather's aspect of being a helper in need and the father's communicative availability, the father's responsibility for schooling, and the father's function of being the provider of the family. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a helper in need and the father's communicative availability, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.069, with a standard error of 0.033 and a z-value of 2.084 ($p = 0.037$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.004 to 0.135. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a helper in need and the father's responsibility with schooling, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.123, with a standard error of 0.050 and a z-value of 2.433 ($p = 0.015$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.024 to 0.222. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a helper in need and the father's function of being a provider, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.045, with a standard error of 0.020 and a z-value of 2.236 ($p = 0.025$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.006 to 0.084.
2. The grandfather's femininity mediates the direct negative but significant effect between the grandfather's aspect of being a provider and the father's communicative availability, the father's responsibility with schooling, but also the father's function as a provider for the family. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the negative direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a provider and the father's communication availability, the estimate of the indirect effect is -0.105, with a standard error of 0.052 and a z-value of -2.010 ($p = 0.044$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.208 to -0.003. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the negative direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a provider and the father's responsibility for schooling, the estimate of the indirect effect is -0.187, with a standard error of 0.081 and a z-value of -2.304 ($p = 0.021$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.346 to -0.028. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the negative direct effect of the grandfather's aspect of being a provider and the father's function of being a provider for the family, the estimate of the indirect effect is -0.068, with a standard error of 0.032 and a z-value of -2.135 ($p = 0.033$), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.130 to -0.006.
3. The grandfather's femininity mediates the significant direct effect between the punitive/violent aspect of the grandfather and the father's communicative availability,

the father's responsibility for schooling, and the father's function of being the provider of the family. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the grandfather's punitive/violent aspect and the father's communicational availability, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.049, with a standard error of 0.024 and a z-value of 2.033 (p = 0.042), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.002 to 0.096. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the punitive/violent aspect of the grandfather and the father's responsibility with schooling, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.087, with a standard error of 0.037 and a z-value of 2.339 (p = 0.019), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.014 to 0.160. Regarding the mediation of the grandfather's femininity on the direct effect of the punitive/violent aspect of the grandfather and the father's function of being the provider of the family, the estimate of the indirect effect is 0.031, with a standard error of 0.015 and a z-value of 2.162 (p = 0.031), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.003 to 0.060.

4. The grandfather's masculinity mediates the direct negative but significant effect between the grandfather's androgenity and the father's responsibility for schooling. The indirect effect estimate is -0.157, with a standard error of 0.069 and a z-value of -2.282 (p = 0.023), the 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.292 to -0.022.
5. The grandfather's masculinity significantly influences the effect that the experience of having a father, as a totality of the grandfather's characteristics, can have on the experience of being a father, as the totality of the characteristics that the father has. The indirect effect estimate is 0.068, with a standard error of 0.029 and a z-value of 2.321 (p = 0.020). The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.024 to 0.139.

The third mediation analysis showed that we cannot speak of statistically significant effects regarding mediation on the influence of grandfather's paternity on father's paternity by the father's personality type and the degree to which he perceives himself as masculine/feminine. **The fourth and fifth mediation analyses** showed that we cannot speak of statistically significant indirect effects on the influence of the grandfather's paternity on the father's paternity, in terms of the interpersonal characteristics of the grandfather and the interpersonal characteristics of the father.

Discussions and conclusions

With regard to hypothesis 1, the statistical analysis showed that there are elements that support that paternal identity and conduct vary according to the personality traits, interpersonal style and gender traits of the father, especially in relation to male identity, an extroverted personality and an interpersonal style that goes in the dominant direction and in the direction of affective warmth. The punitive-violent aspect of fatherhood negatively influences the experience of fatherhood along with the father's femininity, the moral-value father, the provider father, and the interpersonal aspects of the icy father, the modest/resourceful father and the arrogant/calculated father.

Regarding hypothesis 2, statistical analysis shows that the father's self-image varies according to the personality traits and gender traits of the grandfather, with the variation in the father's neuroticism, masculinity and femininity being explained by the grandfather's neuroticism, masculinity and femininity. In addition, it is possible to find a compensatory mechanism in the father's personality for the neuroticism and femininity of the grandfather in the form of the father's masculinity.

With regard to hypothesis 3, we can say that there is evidence that fathers' interpersonal competences correlate with the representation of grandfatherrents' interpersonal competences, but cannot be explained by them. In addition, we can speak of a phenomenon of generational complementarity that is confirmed by other research (Dippel et al., 2023), the modest/ingenious/exploitable/too conciliatory father correlates with the glacial/distant grandfather, i.e. the father who is characterized by the maximum of submission and affective warmth correlates with the grandfather who is characterized by the maximum of domination and affective coldness. Some of the interpersonal aspects that negatively influence the paternal experience were expected, the case of the glacial father and grandfather and the arrogant/calculated but unexpected grandfather and the modest/ingenious father, the father who is characterized by maximum submission and emotional warmth.

The results on the interpersonal circumplex scales for both grandfathers and fathers tend to be similar, most respondents retrospectively described their father and described themselves in the area of the warm/agreeable octant, followed by the gregarious/extroverted and reserved/introverted.

Regarding hypothesis 4, the results indicate that although many of the direct effects of the grandfather's perceptions and behaviors on the father are not statistically significant, certain traits such as: the grandfather's gender role model, the punitive/violent aspect of the

grandfather, the grandfather's aspect as a partner in activities, the moral function of the grandfather, the androgynous aspect of the grandfather, and the grandfather's willingness to be helpful when needed have an impact directly significant on the father. Also, the fact that we can talk about the significant indirect effects due to the mediation of the femininity and masculinity of the grandfather, suggests complex mechanisms of influence in the relationship between generations.

3.3. Study 3. Development of an intervention strategy to improve fathers' experience of exercising the paternal role

As a result of the two previous studies, it turned out that in terms of the experience of paternity, the most important aspect is the relational one associated with a positive involvement, and that these aspects are related to the experience that fathers had with their own fathers, but also with their masculine identity, with an extraverted personality and with an interpersonal style that goes in the dominant direction but also in the direction of affective warmth. The intervention strategy we have proposed addresses the problems that arise from the exercise of the paternal role, namely: dysfunctional paternal model taken from one's own father or grandfather who promotes a paternal role far from the child or with a punitive-violent aspect, deficient identity process in the area of masculinity and neurotic personal characteristics, and an interpersonal style that goes in the dominant direction or submissiveness without affective warmth.
The intervention and training strategy of paternity psychology is complementary to any other specific psychotherapeutic strategy. It includes:
1. Directions of psychological work
2. Type of setting
3. Elements of the intervention strategy

Directions of psychological work

This theoretical model assumes a personalized, non-aggressive and non-critical therapeutic framework of work, as a reassuring restorative therapeutic space that allows addressing 1. intrapersonal emotional wounds caused by a repulsive-neglectful and uninvolved father and 2. interpersonal relationships with their sons affected by the transmission of the father's toxic

responses in childhood (Harper & Shaw, 2024). Any psychological intervention strategy in the case of fathers must be carried out in the extension and correspond to a psychology of masculinity (American Psychological Association, 2018). This means considering the effects of masculine socialization on their client and themselves, but also how gender norms may impact clinical engagement and outcomes, the need to develop *process-specific microskills* (e.g., self-disclosure, normalization), language adaptation (e.g., male-oriented metaphors), and more engaging treatment styles for men (e.g., collaborative, transparent, action-oriented and goal-oriented ways) (Seidler et al, 2018, Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2003). The theoretical model proposed in this paper for psychotherapeutic interventions refers to what is specific to the representation and role of the father. In order to facilitate a psychotherapeutic strategy personalized to the particular situation of fathers, we propose to use the concept of *paternal competences* as the behavioral and instrumental expression of imaginary and symbolic aspects. The concept of *paternal competence* represents a particular form of the concept of *parental competence* restricted to the following dimensions of fathers' behavior: communicational availability, positive affective availability, partner for activities, help when needed, responsible for schooling, male gender model, moral-value orientation, androgynous example, provider, violent-punitive aspect.

Type of setting

In this paper we proposed the development of an intervention strategy model in order to improve the fathers' experience regarding the exercise of the paternal role, keeping the idea of an integrative, relational and phenomenological psychodynamic approach.

In addressing the complexity of identity and paternal roles, psychoanalytic strategies can play an important role especially if they take place in the context of an expressive-supportive psychotherapeutic continuum, which refers both to the specific communication modality of free association, but also to interventions such as interpretation, observation, confrontation, clarification, encouragement to elaborate, empathic validation, psychoeducational interventions, advice and praise (Gabbard, 2014). The integrative approach involves a flexible and inclusive general attitude towards psychotherapeutic models, which allows the adoption of the most attractive and useful theories for working with clients in general, and a multilevel perspective, flexible to the needs of patients and sensitive to the therapeutic alliance (Zarbo et al, 2016, Greben, 2004, Norcross & Goldfried, 2005). The phenomenological approach ensures a psychotherapeutic framework open to change, the psyche being assumed as being rather as a

phenomenon (ipseity), which manifests, modifies and acquires different meanings through its relationship to the world, and not an isolated self that remains unchanged (Arciero et al, 2018).

Elements of the intervention strategy

The intervention strategy in order to improve the fathers' experience of exercising the paternal role was pursued based on the following elements, which can be approached in parallel, or sequentially, complementary to any specific psychological strategy:

1. Evaluation and change of interpersonal style according to the axes of domination vs submissiveness, coldness vs affective warmth.
2. Evaluation and modification of the degree to which one can speak of paternal competences or rather of paternal needs.
3. Identity assessment, whether or not the client has clarified a paternal identity model according to which he acts, and finding benchmarks for a new identity project that includes the harmonization of the different roles that the client has to satisfy.
4. Evaluation of the existential project with the client's location in the field of his reality rather than in the virtuality of a compensatory fantasy.

Having the following remedial measures:

1. to encourage fathers to analyze and change the model they have internalized from their fathers as part of the family experience, finding options that are based on their personal resources.
2. to support fathers in the paternal identity process by finding a balance between self-image and functional masculinity, a personal meaning of existence, diverse roles and the couple relationship.
3. to facilitate the modification of disturbed behavioral, attitudinal and relational patterns in terms of the exercise of the paternal role, from an interpersonal attitude of domination or submission, associated with affective coldness to an attitude of medium or maximum level of domination but combined with a medium to maximum level of affective warmth.
4. favoring the maturation process of men in a paternal role, personal development, and physical and mental well-being.

Following the implementation of the remedial measures, the fathers who will benefit from the intervention strategy regarding the improvement of the paternal experience, will develop the following skills:

1. they will be able to become aware of and change their internal working model regarding the exercise of the paternal role.
2. They will be motivated to develop and maintain a communicational and affective availability with their children, but also with their life partner or wife.
3. They will understand their own needs but also those of their children and will initiate new ways of providing help adapted to their reality.
4. They will clarify their own existential project through which they will harmonize the different roles they are responsible for in the sense of remaining relationally involved in the lives of the children but also of the family.

Illustrating the intervention strategy - two case studies

In the psychotherapy office, the history of the transition from the status of being an exponent of masculinity to the status of father is usually a problematic, unwanted, sudden, conflictive one, as a result of a power play with the partner, usually as a micro-trauma.

We have illustrated how the struggle of men to become better fathers appears in the psychotherapy office, but also how paternal competences/needs can be psychologically approached within psychotherapy through two case studies of individual psychotherapies.

In general, the atmosphere in therapeutic sessions with men is tense, with many repressed, suppressed or denied negative affects in the background, and a more or less silent form of conflict through which the male client, if the therapy is conducted correctly, strengthens his character and becomes much more courageous in existing according to his needs and reality. This tension is generated by the client's pendulum between an interpersonal attitude of domination and submission, between coldness and affective warmth that must be addressed attitudinally by the psychotherapist through a pendulum between submission and a minimum level of domination, combined with a pendulum from an average level of affective warmth to a maximum one.

In the first case, it is about a man who ardently wants to be a perfect father, and whose desire turns against him because he is not developed enough to assume the difficulty of the paternal role, being still a little boy who cannot cope with some women who are in his life, especially his mother but also his sister, or those who appear in his life, his two wives and two daughters.

In the second case, it is about a man who does not know if he wants the children he has, but who offers them to his wife as an offering for having reaccepted him into her life after a breakup in which he tested his courage to exist alone and after the death of his father in a stupid

accident, a father who lived his whole life separately from his family, as if he were alone.

CHAPTER IV. GENERAL DISCUSSIONS: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Synthesis of research results and contributions

Taking into account the theoretical analysis and the results obtained in this research, we can outline a theoretical model regarding the experience of fatherhood.

This theoretical model describes the paternal experience from a more positive and emotional perspective, in a relational context delimited by the broader framework of a generational transmission of paternal models. In other words, this work tried to answer the question "who is a father?", and not the question "what is a father?", a question that lies at the heart of the analytical experience (Lacan, 2022).

Our theoretical model proposes as an answer to the question "who is a father?": he is a son of a father, who can remember and describe the experience of having had a father because he has introjected an *inner father* based on the filial relationship (Krampe, 2003). This *inner father* is part of a dynamic co-identification process through which the father identifies with his son, *Myson/Myself*, which allows the father to develop relationally in the role of parent (Watson-Phillips, 2016, Watson-Phillips, 2017).

Summarizing the results obtained in the first study, we can say that, at the level of the paternal experience, there is a correspondence between the imaginary and symbolic aspects of fatherhood, both in terms of the responding fathers and the grandfatherrents. In other words, it is necessary to re-evaluate the psychodynamically inspired hypothesis according to which the imaginary and symbolic aspects differ radically, and the one referring to the father as rather a function with a fundamental role in the formation of the individual psyche and civilization, from the perspective of the substantial presence of a father (Freeman, 2008). In the network of paternal representations, the emphasis falls retrospectively, the important variables being those of the generation of grandfatherrents and great-grandfatherrents, the experience of being a father tending to be on the margins of representations, standing under the aspect of a father's son rather than being a father. This situation can be interpreted from the perspective of the *Myson/Myself theory* (Watson-Phillips, 2016, Watson-Phillips, 2017), namely that for a current

father, the experience of having a father and grandfather has a much greater weight than the current experience, in the sense that it facilitates the passage through the paternal identity process.

Summarizing the results obtained in the second study, we can say that paternal identity and behavior vary according to the personality traits, interpersonal style and gender traits of the father, especially in relation to male identity, but together with an extraverted personality and an interpersonal style that goes in the dominant direction but also in the direction of affective warmth. The punitive-violent aspect of fatherhood negatively influences the experience of fatherhood along with the father's femininity, the moral-value aspect, the role of provider, and the interpersonal aspects: the icy father, the modest/ingenious father and the arrogant/calculated father. The father's self-image varies depending on the grandfather's personality traits and gender traits, with a significant degree of explanation of this variation in the father's personality of the grandfather's personality elements. In addition, we find a compensatory mechanism in the father's personality for the grandfather's neuroticism and femininity in the form of the father's masculinity. The results showed that we can speak of a correlation between fathers' interpersonal competences and the representation of grandfatherrents' interpersonal competences, but that they cannot be explained by them. In addition, we can speak of an interpersonal complementarity, which is confirmed by other research, (Dippel et al., 2023), the modest/ingenious/exploitable/overly conciliatory father correlates with the glacial/distant grandfather, i.e. the father who is characterized by the maximum of submission and affective warmth correlates with the grandfather who is characterized by the maximum of domination and affective coldness. The results on the interpersonal circumplex scales for both grandfathers and fathers tend to be similar, most respondents retrospectively described their father and described themselves as having a warm/agreeable interpersonal attitude, followed by a gregarious/extroverted one, but also reserved/introverted. In addition, the results of the second study indicate that although many of the direct effects of the grandfather's perceptions and behaviors on the father are not statistically significant, certain traits such as: the grandfather's gender role model, the punitive/violent aspect of the grandfather, the grandfather's aspect as a partner in activities, the moral function of the grandfather, the androgynous aspect of the grandfather and the grandfather's willingness to be helpful in need have a significant direct impact on the father. Also, the fact that we can only talk about significant indirect effects due to the mediation of the femininity and masculinity of the grandfather, suggests complex mechanisms of influence in the relationship between generations. These results are consistent with other research showing that paternal involvement may be influenced by aspects of the

father's personality that were inherited from his own father (Levy-Shiff & Israelashvili, 1986, Lis et al., 2004), but also research in the direction of the hypothesis of a father who through his behavior shapes or compensates for the behavior of his own father, that is, of the grandfather (Floyd & Morman, 2000, Floyd & Morman, 2003, Odenweller et al., 2013).

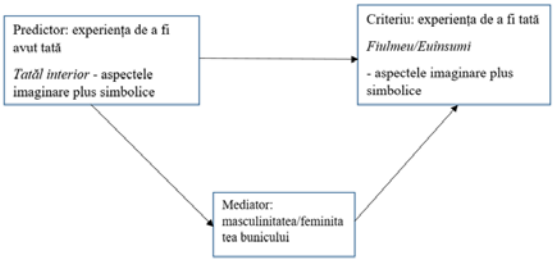


Figure. 11.2. The total effect of the influence of the experience of having a father on the experience of being a father with the mediation of the grandfather's masculinity/femininity.

Comparing the theoretical model presented on page 9 (see Figure 2.1) and the model presented previously (see Figure 4.1.), a series of differences can be found that we have discussed in the previous pages.

Summarizing the results obtained in the third study, it is observed that the experience of becoming and being a father takes place under the influence of inherited paternal models that can be more or less adaptive or maladaptive. They require either counter-script processing as a form of compensating for a negative paternal experience, or nuances, or adaptations to the father's personality and/or life context. At the same time, we are witnessing an identity process in stages that cannot take place without practicing skills such as communicational availability, positive affective availability, partner for activities, help when needed, responsible for schooling, male gender model, moral-value orientation, androgynous example and provider. Both case studies demonstrate the need for psychotherapists to create a safe space in which men feel they can express their vulnerabilities without fear of being judged, and to show genuine interest and empathy, validating their experiences and feelings. The two cases present the difficulty of identity maturation regarding the paternal role. If a woman becomes a mother through a double process, physiological but also psychological, which takes time and comes with important changes, becoming and being a father tends to be an exclusively difficult psychological process that requires some form of psychological help in most cases.

A novelty element brought by this research was the translation and adaptation to the Romanian population of the *Fatherhood Scale* test instrument developed by G.L. Dick (Dick, 2004), the Romanian version being called *Scala paternităţii*, abbreviated *FS-Ro*, and of the FAF subscale, "Father's relationship with his own father", of the Intergenerational Family Influences scale, within the instrument The Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ), an instrument developed by E. M. Krampe and R. R. Newton (Krampe & Newton, 2006), the Romanian version being called *Relaţia tatălui cu propriul tată*, or *FAF-Ro*. Another novelty element brought by this research is that it has produced a significant amount of information regarding the situation of Romanian fathers, both quantitative and qualitative information, which can be used both in psychology, especially for the clinical field and developmental psychology, and in the field of social work and pedagogy.

4.2. Limitations and future research directions

The research of the experience of fatherhood was carried out in this thesis with some inherent limitations.

First of all, the study has a small number of participants. This aspect was determined by the covid-19 pandemic conditions that affected the decrease in fathers' interest in participating, which was problematic in general, but also by the lack of a control group, in the case of the intervention strategy.

Secondly, this research focused on the retrospective measurement of the paternal experience, and thus on the subjectivity of the participating fathers. This type of situation is specific to a psychoanalytic/psychodynamic theoretical approach and psychotherapy in general, which has at its center an epistemic trust that refers to the fundamental trust in the authenticity and personal relevance of the knowledge transmitted interpersonally. This epistemic trust enables social learning in an ever-changing social and cultural context and allows individuals to benefit from the (social) environment (Fonagy & Allison, 2014, Fonagy et al, 2019). However, it may be objected that such retrospective, subjective reports from memory cannot be validated by independent information about the objective way in which the parents behaved (Winefield et al., 1989). Even in this case, the limit of retrospective subjective reporting still allows the use of clinical application, in the sense of trying to identify and subsequently advising parents who have or may have the risk of difficulties in raising their child as a result of their own experience with abusive or neglectful parents (Winefield et al., 1989).

Thirdly, the answers offered by the fathers participating in this research can be interpreted in a

psychodynamic/psychoanalytic framework as the expression of a collective repression of the negative aspects, related to the symbolic presence of the paternal authority, "the terrible father", that is, the representative of the law, of the forbidding and prohibition in his terms (Lacan, 2013), precisely because they disrupt the representation of an affective and positively involved father, and thus maintaining a good relationship with one's own father.

Regarding the future research directions, we intend to extend the research of paternity psychology in Romania to the following research topics: a. the way in which, in Romania, the mother determines the application and situation of paternal conduct; b. description of paternal role behaviors in the case of stepfathers in Romania; c. understanding the situation of fathers with a gender identity other than the male one in Romania; d. understanding fathers in relation to their teenage sons but also to the age beyond adolescence.

4.3. Conclusions

This paper aimed to provide some theoretical landmarks necessary for the conceptualization of a paternal identity and function and to bring back to the fore the problem of the experience of fatherhood. The situation in which we find ourselves with regard to these two concepts is due to the conceptualization of a rather symbolic presence of fathers, as an image of a legitimate authority by and under the condition of their substantial absence from the upbringing of children. This glorification of a paternal power, in the form of the conceptualization of a paternal function, has been achieved both with the marginalization of fathers in relation to family life, but also with the denial of an intimate relationship between father and child (Freeman, 2008). The results of the research showed that fatherhood is strongly influenced by men's relationships with their own fathers and the quality of this relationship, and that the imaginary and the symbolic are both trapped in the subjectivity of the experience of being a father, in the form of the relational aspect, which is the current form in which men fulfill their paternal role.

However, the neurotic aspect implied by the experience of paternity remains to be resolved, namely that, in order to free himself from the weight of his desire, the neurotic subject loves to complete himself with the symptom of the family, namely that of being a good father, imagining that this could give him the incomprehensible key to his desire (Laurent, 2008).

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