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Generational transfer of psychological resilience



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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Review of literature on psychological resilience reveals interest in this subject area among representatives of biological and social sciences, as well as humanities. While explorers of human psychological reality search for the cause and effect relationship, the semantic area of this notion keeps evolving and it expands conceptualization of the definition.

Aim: To establish the generational transmission of psychological resilience/buoyancy and basic hope in the family system.

Material and methods: The Psychological Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ) was used in the study drawn by Trzebiński and Zięba. The study participants included 106 people, 32 families, students ($N = 35$) and their parents ($N = 70$). The age range within the group of students was from 19 to 29 years, within the group of parents it ranged from 30 to 50 years and over. There were 54 men and 52 women in total. The subjects were recruited from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, and they were studying on various courses.

Results and discussion: A correlation analysis and a hierarchical regression analysis were made. The following results were obtained: there was a positive correlation between psychological resilience and basic and there was also a positive correlation between the order of birth and psychological resilience. The obtained data indicate significance of generational transmission in the family system.

Conclusions: Interaction of relations within a family system encourages initiation of cognitive curiosity and exploration of discussed problems within the field of psychological resilience and basic hope.

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1. Introduction

Definition area of psychological resilience indicates a wide semantic range of the term. It refers to the notion of resilience, flexibility, durability and suppleness.¹⁻⁴ In literature on the subject there is a concept of resilience (durability), presented as the process of effective overcoming of undesirable situations and experiences. Another description of the term refers to the Block ego-resiliency theory – and it denotes a personality attribute or relatively constant resource of an individual.^{5,6} Resilience is portrayed as a combination of skills enabling efficient overcoming substantial stress, where the dominant mechanism is suppleness and creative conquering of adversities, the ability to break away from negative experiences as well as the capacity for inducing positive emotions (2008).

The idea of resilience was created by Block.^{5,6} It defines psychological resilience as adaptational flexibility, the ability to adjust the level of impulse control (increase or decrease) to the situation.

The notion of resilience is also described as a personality property, which encompasses cognitive, emotional and behavioral components, it is a relatively stable disposition, activating the course of flexible adaptation to constantly changing conditions of existence.⁷ The existence of resilience is dependent on a number of individual traits of a person, such as high level of optimism and life energy as well as competences connected with understanding oneself – one's efficiency, one's emotions and behaviors.⁸⁻¹⁰

Psychological resilience ensures that the individual searches for new competences in difficult situations and contextual as well as familial factors often determine activation of individual resources of a person.¹¹⁻¹³ And so Horton and Waller indicate significant influence of basic hope, as one of the resources having an effect on feeling the suffering by mothers raising children with chronic somatic illnesses.¹⁴

Basic hope is defined as essential personality factor, predicting the individual's response to the situation of novelty and the situation of disintegration of previously established order.¹⁵ According to Erikson hope is an individual, particular belief pertaining to functioning of the world, which is orderly, seems sensible and is wholly favorably inclined toward a person.¹⁶

Hope is also understood as a cognitive complexity based on interconnected components: plans which involve a goal and possibilities of reaching it, taking into account individual resources of a person. Studies indicate that people with higher level of hope establish significantly higher number of goals, as well as taking up challenges to accomplish, which are marked with necessity for considerable effort.¹⁷ Verification of the role, which hope fulfills in capacity for adaptation in mothers who look after a child with a chronic illness, indicate hope as a factor of resilience. The influential force of hope as a component of resilience is highest in situations where mothers recognize themselves as persons burdened with significant stress. In these conditions, high level of hope is conducive to lowering discomfort and suffering in comparison with mothers declaring little hope.¹⁴

2. Aim

To establish the generational transmission of psychological resilience/buoyancy and basic hope in the family system.

2.1. Hypotheses

H₁. Basic hope affects the development of psychological resilience.

H₂. Psychological resilience and basic hope has an effect on psychological resilience and basic hope in children.

H₃. Birth order has an effect on transmission of psychological resilience and basic hope in children.

H₄. Basic hope in both parents develops on a similar value level.

3. Material and methods

The study participants included 106 people from 32 families, students (N = 35) and their parents (N = 70). The age range within the group of students was from 19 to 29 years, within the group of parents it ranged from 30 to 50 years and over. There were 54 men and 52 women in total. The subjects were recruited from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, and they were studying on various university and vocational courses. The vast majority of participating students attended the University of Warmia and Mazury. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary.

3.1. Analysis of questionnaire

The Psychological Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ) was used in the study and the Basic Hope Inventory BHI-12, drawn by Trzebiński and Zięba.^{6,18}

PRQ is the Polish adaptation of the ego resiliency scale. It examines psychological resilience understood as a personality feature which reflects the ability to adjust the level of self-control to the demands of a situation.^{6,18} The second applied tool was the BHI-12.¹⁵ It examines basic hope as understood by Erikson, which describes properties of the world as orderly, making sense and generally favorably inclined toward people. Apart from the aforementioned questionnaires, a standard register was used, including questions about sex, age, education, place of residence as well as questions about the number of siblings and order of birth.

3.2. Study procedure

Purposive group sampling was used. The condition for group selection was to have at least one parent. Orphaned people also filled the questionnaires but their results were not included in statistical analyses. Participants who reported the need for feedback received information about their results

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