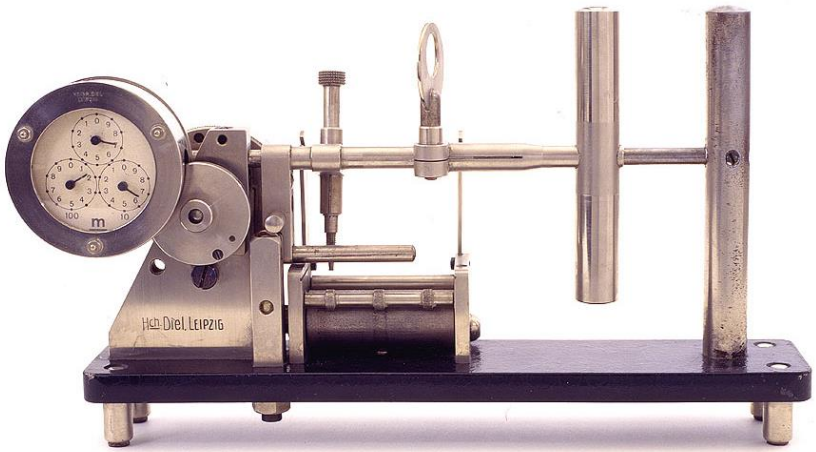
XXV NAUČNI SKUP

EMPIRIJSKA ISTRAŽIVANJA U PSIHOLOGIJI

29 – 31. MART 2019.
FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET, UNIVERZITET U BEOGRADU



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BEOGRAD, 2019

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RESEARCH ON ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN SERBIA

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The research was supported and fully funded by UNICEF, Serbia.

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC – ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH LIFE-OUTCOME

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This is an introductory abstract for other papers within this symposium, which are all part of the same study, Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) in Serbia. ACE is a traumatic experience in one's life occurring before the age of 18 that the person remembers as an adult. The purpose of this survey was to explore the prevalence of ACEs and their correlates on a sample of 18-65 years old in Serbia. We used multistage random sampling, with a stratified cluster sample in the first (187 settlements were sampled from 4 regions), and random sample in the second stage (a random-walk technique for sampling participants). The final sample consisted of 2792 respondents (57.4% females), interviewed face-to-face. Instrument package included: ACE International Questionnaire, Health Appraisal, Family Health History, Trauma Symptom Checklist, Benevolent Childhood experience, Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised, HEXACO, DELTA9, and Non-suicidal self-injury. Each ACE was represented by a binary score, in two ways: (1) any ACE score implies that participant had a specific event at least "once or twice"; (2) frequent ACE implies that participant had specific events "many times". Factor analysis, principal axis with varimax rotation extracted three dimensions: violence (involvement in physical fight, bullying, community violence, physical abuse, collective violence, psychological abuse), neglect (depression in family, suicide in family, psychological neglect, sexual abuse and parental separation) and abuse (alcoholism in family, abuse of mother or father by the partner, incarceration of family member, drug abuse in family and physical neglect). If we use ACEs as predictors of various life events in multiple regression analysis, the highest prediction is gained for a number of suicidal attempts ($R^2 = .53$, $F = 2.38$; $df = 17, 36$; $p < 0.05$) - more ACEs lead to more attempts, with psychological neglect as strongest predictor. Most frequent ACEs in Serbia are community violence (any 69.4%; frequent 37.7%), psychological abuse (any 43.7%; frequent 26.3%), and involvement in a physical fight (any 37.7%; frequent 19.7%). For comparison, physical abuse and domestic violence appeared more frequently in Serbia than in Wales study, while parent separation and sexual abuse appeared a bit more frequently in Wales sample. Possible higher prevalence of

ACEs in our study might occur due to the context of the collective experience of wars, civil unrest, insecurity, etc.

Keywords: adverse childhood experience, prevalence, socio-demographic correlates, suicide prediction

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LORD OF THE FLIES – BASIC PERSONALITY TRAITS AND ACES

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Studies show that personality traits and maltreatment, being abused or neglected in childhood, are independently related to the different negative health outcomes later in life. However, studies investigating relations between basic personality traits and different forms of ACEs are scarce. Available evidence indicates that Neuroticism, Openness, and Agreeableness are related to different ACEs. In this survey, we have investigated relations between ACEs and basic personality space defined by the HEXACO model and Disintegration trait. In addition, the validity of personality traits and ACEs in the prediction of different physical and mental health outcomes was tested. For assessment of basic personality traits, we have used 60-items HEXACO-PI-R, while Disintegration was assessed using the 20-item DELTA9 questionnaire. For assessment of physical health, the Health Appraisal Questionnaire was used, while mental health was assessed using the Trauma Symptom Checklist. Results showed that when controlling for age, among personality traits, the strongest correlate of the total ACE score was Disintegration (r = .29, p = .000), followed by Honesty (r = -.19, p = .000), Agreeableness (r = -.18, p = .000), and Extraversion (r = -.14, p = .000). Disintegration was the most consistent correlate of several specific ACE types, i.e., depression/suicidal tendencies, alcoholism and drug abuse in the family, violent behavior of family members, physical abuse, and physical neglect. Furthermore, it was investigated whether ACEs add to the prediction of physical and mental health outcomes over and above basic personality structure. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that ACEs explained an additional 6% of the variance of overall physical health over and above all seven personality traits (which explain 22%). In the prediction of mental health, ACEs added little (3% of the variance) to what is already predicted by the personality traits (22% of the variance), which suggests the dominant role of basic personality structure in the mental-health status. Disintegration has a dominant role in the prediction of both physical and mental health. Several hypotheses on the relationship between basic personality traits, the specific role of Disintegration and ACEs are discussed.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), basic personality traits, HEXACO, Disintegration

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SPONZORI SKUPA:

CIP – Katalogizacija u publikaciji
Narodna biblioteka Srbije, Beograd

PROCEEDINGS OF THE XXIV SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY (25; 2019., Beograd)

[Knjiga rezimea] / XXV naučni skup Empirijska istraživanja u psihologiji 29–31. mart 2019., Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu; [organizatori]

Institut za psihologiju i Laboratorija za eksperimentalnu psihologiju – 1. Izd – Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2019 – 140 str.

Kor. Nasl. – Knjiga rezimea na srp. i engl. jeziku – elektronsko izdanje

ISBN 978-86-6427-091-5

1. Institut za psihologiju (Beograd)
2. Laboratorija za eksperimentalnu psihologiju (Beograd)

a) Psihologija – Empirijska istraživanja – Knjiga rezimea